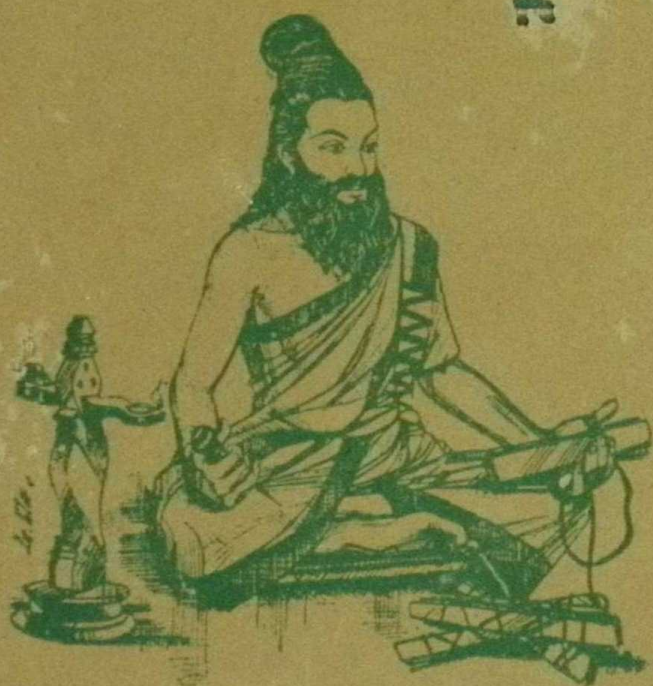


ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES OF THIRUVALLUVAR



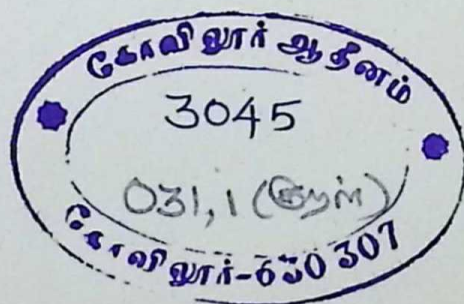
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ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES OF THIRUVALLUVAR

B. NATARAJAN

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY FRIEND
Late Dr. R. P. SETHU PILLAI

54-2

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The Kural of Valluvar stands as an undying beacon light over the arc of Time.

As a book of practical guidance to the art of living Kural has few parallels in the literatures of the world.

Kural shows the way to life's poise, depicting its simple graces and innocent pleasures with delicate touches of pleasing poetry and persuasive reasoning.

Its philosophy is perennial. Its coverage is universal. Its humanism is pervasive. Its brevity is masterly. Its orderliness is amazing. Its poetry is exalting.

It is a book that is opened with expectation and closed with delight and profit; and once started

the repetition of the experience is irresistible day after day.

No wonder, scholars of diverse sects and creeds, races and languages, have read it with diligence through twenty centuries and have alike acclaimed its universal and timeless approach to life's problems.

It is tempting to run away with the thought that a book such as Valluvar's serves as a prized peg for one to hang his own thoughts on. But it is not so. The universal principles of Valluvar, like electric current, take on new uses with changing socio-political scenarios.

That has been so with all the celebrated commentators of Valluvar, of whom we have had no less than a dozen in the past, and several times that number in the renascent present.

Thus has the One Truth been viewed from diverse angles by each according to the range and power of his glass through a vista of twenty centuries.

It looks as though an undying temptation haunts scholars to hunt for parallels among great and popular works of literature. True, comparative analyses have their right use. But often such ventures tend to drift across their legitimate grounds resulting in muddled reckoning and far-fetched conjectures. The Kural, indeed has

had more than its share of such probings. It has been compared and contrasted with almost every great work round the globe. And it has come out of these acid tests as original, genuine and unalloyed; not without, however, a few hypotheses suggesting possible influences of contemporary and earlier thoughts on the Master Poet. The Arthasastra of Kautilya, in particular, has been freely identified with direct influences on Kural. An attempt has been made at an assessment of this view point.

The Kural does not speak of a framework of an economic system as such. For one thing, the society Valluvar lived in was comparatively simple and placid enough not to warrant any radical change. Secondly, it is not for the Kural to be bogged down in techniques and technologies which are limited by time and space. The Kural principally provides certain basic ingredients without which no economic system in any time and place can run on desired lines. Attempts to capture these profound economic ideas of Valluvar form the core of the book.

Of course there has never been really such a thing as pure economics. Economics has always walked hand in hand with politics. Over the years this bond has steadily grown. While this is so, what is the relevance of Valluvar to modern political economy? This is what the next chapter is all about in a succinct manner,

especially in the context of current ideas on growthmanship.

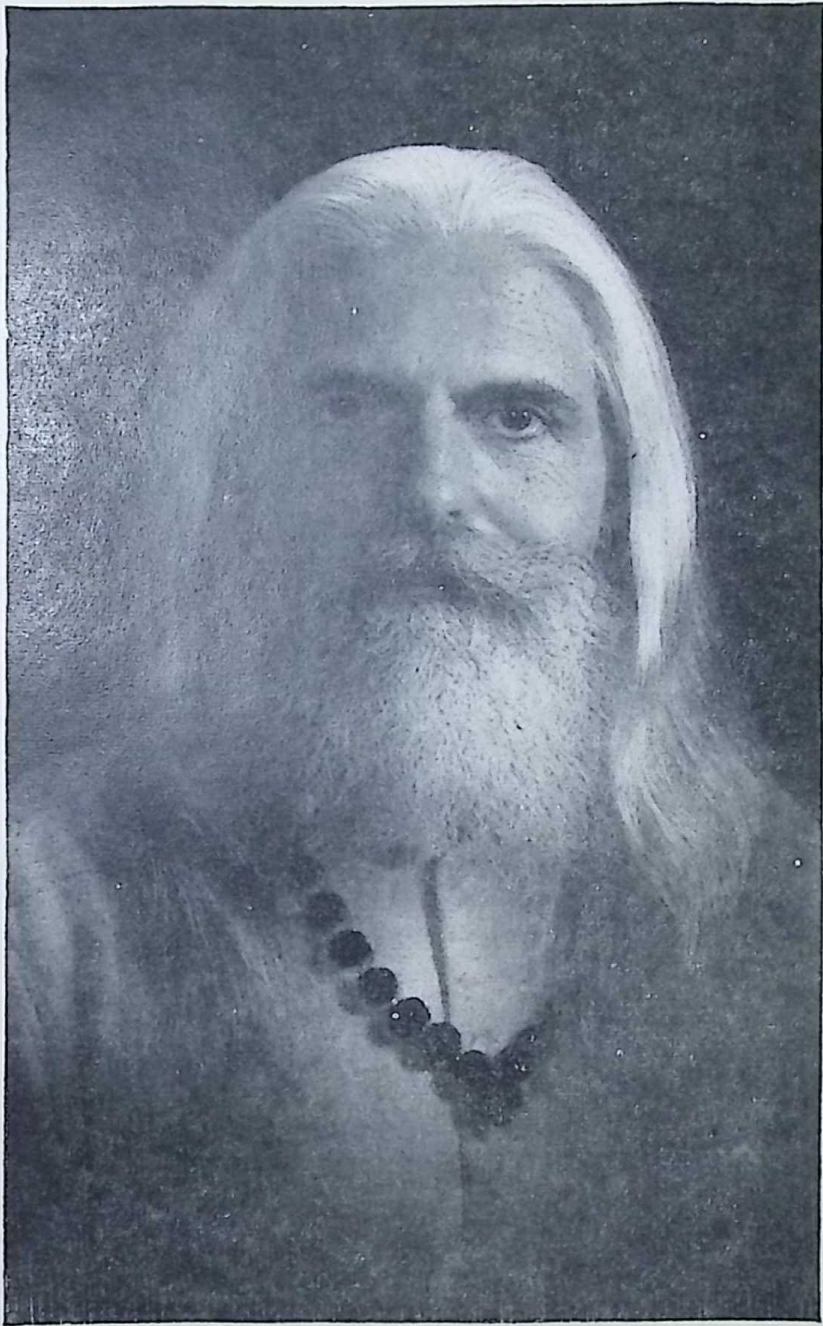
On the all engrossing Polity, Valluvar again wastes no energy trifling with technicalities. He lays down only the fundamentals and reinforces them at great length. From the Payiram or Introduction through the three main divisions of 'Aram' (Righteousness) 'Porul' (Wealth) and 'Inbam' (Love) his political thoughts are found sometimes explicit sometimes implicit. An attempt has therefore been made to delineate Valluvar's thoughts on Legislature, Judiciary, Executive and Foreign Policy.

All these themes have been discoursed upon by me, sometimes on public platforms and sometimes as contributions to learned journals. They have been touched up, transplanted and brought under stiff boards here. So the reader may find repetitions of ideas and expressions here and there, but it is hoped these may not pall.

I pray he overlooks my imperfect and hasty attempts at editing this volume. A disquisition on an ancient work on Applied Ethics touching the sphere of economics, politics and love such as Kural is, may I hope, serve as an appropriate memento to the Decennial celebrations, of the Institute for Techno Economic Studies, assiduously engaged in the field of Applied Economics and allied, practical subjects.

16th Oct. 1980

B. NATARAJAN



MASTER SUBRAMUNIYA

INSPIRED INTRODUCTION

A SAVANT'S VOICE FROM THE WEST

Saint Thiruvalluvar is one of the most venerated of the saints of Saivism. A few of us have just returned from the Guru Puja held on San Marga where a black granite statue of Saint Thiruvalluvar was given abhishekam and deepam in the traditional Hindu form of worship. This great sage of Saivism lived over two thousand years ago. It seemed appropriate to us today that Saint Thiruvalluvar is seated, composing his scripture on the archaic ola leaves with a sharpened stylus. This is how writing was done in India and throughout Asia before paper and ink were invented. The words were scribed into the surface of the dried leaves. Some of the verses composed

by the saint have endured more than twenty centuries and exist today.

There are in Hinduism four legitimate goals of human life—virtue, wealth, love and spiritual liberation. In the Holy Kural Saint Thiruvalluvar spoke in depth on the first three, Virtue, Wealth and Love, but did not discuss Moksha or enlightenment.

Saint Thiruvalluvar gave us the laws of living a good life. He described to us how to live in the world, so the highest dharma could be fulfilled. The Thirukural, as this scripture is known in the Tamil language in which it was originally written, is one of the most revered scriptures of Hinduism.

In fact, other religions also claim it as their own. The Jains claim it, saying that it expresses precisely their ideals of ahimsa, or non-violence, of dharma, of asceticism and other aspects of Jainism. The Christians have argued that the Kural is so profound and filled with such compassion that it must have been influenced by the early Christian missionaries who came to South India in the first century A. D.,—though they arrived two hundred years later. For Saivites, the Holy Kural is not unlike the Christian Bible, the Torah of the Jews, or the Koran of the Muslims. It is sworn upon in the courts of law in Tamil Nadu, South India, and

Puja or sanctified ceremony is offered to this scripture in the temples and home shrines of the devout. Albert Schweitzer considered it one of the grandest achievements of the human mind.

Many years ago when I was in Sri Lanka—that was in 1949 — I made a vow to bring together the best of the East and the best of the West. I was first introduced to the Holy Kural in those early days. To me it is one of the most important scriptures of the East. It is very practical. It contains wonderful insights into life and reality, teaches us how to deal with the various feelings and circumstances that come to us in our interactions with others. In this sense the Kural is the most relevant sacred text I know, applying to every day matters and common concerns.

Although it has been translated into English by many scholars, the Holy Kural has never been widely known in the Western world. There is a similar work, written in modern times by the mystic Kahlil Gibran, called the Prophet, which has been widely distributed. Everyone knows and loves this great work. The Holy Kural parallels the Prophet in many ways. Both books speak in profound yet useful terms of love and friendship, of health and death, of joy and sorrow. It is my hope that the Holy Kural will soon find its place beside the Prophet and be known by the world for the gem that it is.

The Holy Kural was written by a weaver who lived with his wife, Vasuki, in what is today a part of Madras in South India in the first century before the birth of Christ. Details of his life are meagre. It is known that his wife was the perfect example of devotion and obedience to her husband, and several stories are told depicting the harmony in their marriage. This was Thiruvalluvar's only work, and though it is relatively short, it was sufficient to bring renown to a humble weaver, making him a venerated sage and law-giver of the Tamil Dravidian people.

In the Tamil language "Thiru" means "holy" or "sacred," and "Kural" means anything that is brief or short. In this case it describes the very difficult and disciplined *venpa* meter in which the verses were written. Each verse is extremely short, containing only two lines or fourteen syllables. In fact, it is the shortest form of stanza in the Tamil language. In many ways these couplets are similar to the Sanskrit sloka. The entire scripture consists of 133 chapters with each chapter elucidating a different aspect of human virtue or human fault. There are ten kural couplets per chapter, making a total of 1330 couplets in the entire scripture. In his work Thiruvalluvar chose a topic, such as Children, Friendship or Avoidance of anger, and gave us ten different couplets on the one subject. To properly understand his perspective on a subject,

each of the ten couplets must be read, for they are like facets of a gem-all reflecting the light of his understanding slightly differently and adding to the richness of his comprehension. It has been explained to me that the saint spent the fullness of his life, quietly observing the human condition. Then, toward the end of his life, he was asked to speak out and share the wisdom with others in the community who knew he possessed. The Holy Kural is his response.

The total scripture is divided into four sections: the Preface, Virtue, Wealth and Love. In not speaking of the final objective of human existence, moksha or spiritual liberation, Saint Thiruvalluvar was able to reach out with his message of goodness and touch the lives of many generations. Certainly he knew that in speaking of virtue and love he was leading the soul to the liberation which he perhaps held too sacred, or too advanced, to openly discuss.

The Holy Kural should be used in everyday life-its verses committed to memory and meditated upon, quoted freely as your very own. You will sound wise if you do remember and share these jewels. One of the greatest benefits of this scripture is to guide our actions, and our thoughts, to direct our purpose in life and refine our interactions with our fellow man. Problems can be resolved in the light of the saint's wisdom. If something is going along wrong in

your life, bring the forces of life back into harmony by studying the Holy Kural and applying its knowledge. That is perhaps its main function—to perfect and protect our lives in the everyday world by preventing mistakes which can cause an unhappy Karma, by preventing erroneous attitudes which can bring unnecessary sorrow into our experience. Yet, there is nothing in the Kural that has to be obeyed. Each of the couplets contains such insight, however, that we are drawn to it and want to obey.

Use the verses in this scripture to provide guidelines for effective and virtuous action in your life. It can be our refuge in times of confusion, a source of inspiration when we feel less than inspired, a central hub around which the endless play of Lord Siva's maya revolves. Of course, it can be studied so as to comprehend the nature of virtue and the difficulties caused by transgressing virtue's natural laws. It does not contain a single concept or expression that would offend another faith, and thus it is a fine introduction to the scriptures of the East. The Holy Kural may well be the meeting ground, the common ground, of all religions. It could be called a Common Creed for the modern world. But above all it is to be used by the individual to bring the wisdom of the ages, the wisdom of Saivite Hinduism, into our lives. I hope you will all allow Saint Thiruvalluvar's insights to spark your own intuition and reveal

from within yourself the laws which he too discovered within himself. Do not look upon this scripture as something "out there". Meditation and reflection will reveal that its knowledge lies within, vibrantly alive, dynamically real. It is impossible not to be moved by the grand compassion and the direct discernment of the Kural. Let it enrich your life as you journey along this Eternal Path, the Sanatana Dharma.

I would suggest that you commit to memory as many stanzas as you can. Many have done this, keeping them on the tip of their tongue and in the forefront of their mind. Impress them on the subconscious mind and thereby make a gridwork for living that takes you swiftly to the goal and brings joy in the process; for, Hinduism is joyous religion.

I would also suggest that you teach these gems to the children. This advice and admonition, coming from the world's most ancient faith and culture, will enrich every child's understanding of goodness, right conduct and right thought. It is one of the most astute scriptures in the world today. It should be memorized especially by small children. It will create a positive conscience for their inner decisions, guiding how they will conduct themselves through life. Small children all through South India memorize the Holy Kural in order to be able to chant it, verse

after verse-many can recite the entire 1,330 verses by heart. This gives them a code of living that remains with them the rest of their lives. It is crucial that children be given the benefit of strong principles from an early age, especially in these times when television and the stories, plots and scenes that children see on television, which form the code of living for their lives, provide opposite and obscure values. The Holy Kural is therefore most important. It is essential that the values which are the substance of the Holy Kural—the do's as well as the don'ts—be carried over into the next generation with courage and persistence and fortitude, so that our descendants, the heirs of a future which we are even now in the process of creating, are benefited by these age-old insights into universal laws, humanitarian laws and plain common sense.

This is the responsibility of all parents and those who teach our children. They may use this translation freely, drawing upon its storehouse of virtuous living. Quote from these verses freely. Use them as your very own.

In Saivite Hinduism we believe that the soul is returning to the Source and this maturation is effected and directed by Karma, through experience, through a succession of lives that provide experience from which inner knowledge is attained. Thus passage through one life and then another

brings the soul ever close to its true, effulgent being. Saivites believe that the soul can and does ultimately merge with Siva, with God, with Absolute Reality. It becomes one with God, united in an ultimate experience, or non-experience, called Self-realization, which in turn leads to moksha or liberation from the necessity for further incarnation. This is the final goal, and the Holy Kural provides a foundation upon which the quest for that goal may proceed with confidence and stability.

Excerpts from the Inspired Talk by Master Subramuniya given on Puja Day, Feb. 15, 1979, at the Saiva Siddhanta Church, Hawaii, introducing selections from the Holy Kural.

PART ONE

ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY OF THIRUVALLUVAR

ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY OF THIRUVALLUVAR

1. Setting

Thirukkural is classified among the didactic works of the Sangam Age. It is variously dated from 3rd Century B. C. to 2nd Century A. D. It is considered a work of ethics *par excellence*.

If ethics is the Science of Living, then Thirukkural is the undying classic on the subject. The preoccupation of the work is with the fundamentals of life here below. Of the four-fold conventional division of life's aim into Dharma or Aram (Ethics), Artha or Porul

(Polity), Kama or Inbam (Love), and Moksha or Veedu (Liberation), Thirukkural deliberately excludes the fourth objective, and confines itself to the first three. Valluvar was concerned with building of a model—the three-dimensional Model of Living. All life here below, as he saw it, is comprehensible in terms of these three categories. Anyone living up to the ideals of these three life's divisions will have lived a full life. He "will certainly be counted among the Gods."¹

The Model is an integrated structure. The three chambers of the mansion he erects are inter-connected. A single current runs through them all—Aram or a body of ethical concepts. This central thread is of a fundamental quality. Life may vary and proliferate in its contents; but the fundamentals of right living are unchanging. Life has to be lived as a whole. The ethics behind living is pervasive. It is indivisible into compartments. It knows no distinctions of class, caste, sex, time or space; it is the fundamental truth. In this sense, Thiruvalluvar is an Idealist.

Yet Valluvar is not merely that. If that is all, all Kural could have been contained in perhaps half a dozen chapters. The Ideal assumes its meaning and significance only as it is applied to the business of living. The Ethics Fundamental faces varying situations in the realm of

reality. Life is a highly complex activity. It is something of a multi-faceted glass dome; and as through all its segments the central spark of Ethics Fundamental burns eternally, the dome of life throws up a spectrum of variegated hues, presenting an appearance of differences, diversity and changeability. Yet there is no contradiction in all this; no inconsistency with the Ideal, for it is but the appearance—the unchanging Ideal in the context of changing Reality. The Ideal still remains there, fixed and fundamental. The appearance is the inevitable result of the process of application—the marrying of the Ideal to the Real, the permanent to the passing phenomena. That constitutes the intelligent way of living.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa gives a story. I shall reproduce it in the inimitable words of the story-teller 'M'.

"In a forest there lived a holy man who had many disciples. One day he taught them to see God in all beings and knowing things, to bow low before them all. A disciple went to the forest to gather wood for the sacrificial fire. Suddenly he heard an outcry: 'Get out of the way. A mad elephant is coming'. All but the disciple of the holy man took to their heels. He reasoned that the elephant was also God in another form. Then why should he run away from it? He stood still, bowed before the animal, and began to sing its praises. The

mahut of the elephant was shouting: 'Run away, run away'. But the disciple did not move. The animal seized him with its trunk, cast him to one side, and went on its way. Hurt and bruised, the disciple lay unconscious on the ground. Hearing what had happened, his teacher and brother disciples came to him and carried him to the hermitage. With the help of some medicine he soon regained consciousness. Someone asked him. 'You knew the elephant was coming. Why did not you leave the place? 'But' he said, 'our teacher has told us that God Himself has taken all these forms, of animals as well as men. Therefore thinking it was only the Elephant God that was coming, I did not run away'. At this the teacher said: Yes, my child, it is true that the Elephant God was coming; but the Mahut God forbade you to stay there. Since all are manifestations of God, why did not you trust mahut's words? You should have heeded the words of Mahut God'.²-Again, coming nearer our times, take the life of Gandhiji. His basic philosophy was non-violence. But when the occasion demanded, the Mahatma did not hesitate to preach his people, "Do or die". Or, when the honour of woman was threatened in the troubled days of Partition in 1947, he did not think it consistent with his ideal philosophy to preach a course of action other than that of passive resistance.

There is an incident told of Valluvar's own life, apocryphal though it be. Valluvar was selling a piece of cloth which he himself had woven on his own loom. A rogue, intent on mischief, tore it into two halves and asked the price of one-half. Valluvar quoted half price. The professed buyer further subdivided it and then asked the price of the quarter piece. Valluvar quoted one-fourth. But when the trying customer proceeded to further fragment the piece, Valluvar showed his fist! Patience, his ideal, had now reached the stage of realistic application. And whenever it does so, it assumes an aspect of intelligent reasoning which is *prima facie* divorced from the ideal. But in fact it does no violence to it. It is but investing the ideal with, what the economists call, the utilities of time and place. It is the translating of the ideal to the rationality of living. It is by no means a transmutation of the ideal. It is but the living of the ideal, as life demands it. The sage Vyasa would have delineated a far less noble Dharmaputra, had he not made the embodiment of patience fight when fighting was called for.

All this, however, is not to fall in with the views of certain philosophers who hold that ethics is a changing code, in concept and contents, changing with times and circumstances. Where Valluvar seems to differ is that there is a core of fundamental concepts, which is unvarying and permanent, the bedrock of all human conduct,

the motive force of all right living. What make it change, or rather appear to change, are the realities of life's situations. But the core remains unaffected.

This then is Valluvar's contribution—the postulating of an ideal code, and the delineation of that ideal code to meet the realities of all major situations that life gives rise to. It is not a reconciliation of the ideal with the real. It is the blending of them into a harmonious way of living. In a word, Pragmatic Idealism. A born artist in weaving that he was, he could work the woof of living reality into the warp of fundamental ideality and produce a piece of workmanship that is at once splendid and wearing in its qualities. The Spiritual and the Material are no longer to be two distinct paths, mutually exclusive. The Spiritual can be lived in the Material, the Ideal in the Real. The Spiritual is a purposeless negation if it bears no relevance to the realities of material living; and the Material is base anarchy if uninformed by the Spiritual. The one supports and sustains the other. Abstract philosophy does not interest Valluvar. What absorbs his mind is concrete practical philosophy—philosophy applied to life. Hence his devotion to ethics, political philosophy, and sociology rather than to logic and epistemology. It was a unique synthesis.

The times needed such a synthesis. A peep into the infinite vista of Time shows that history

is a rhythmic process, alternating between epochs of emotion and epochs of rationality. Centuries of striving after the material things of life have been followed by equally long periods of religious fervour and other-worldly preoccupation. The worldliness allures for a time, eggs on humanity to great achievements; then with surfeit palls; the zest and vigour of physical living diminish and the human mind longs for a dreamy change. Then follow years of passivity which ripens into apathy and lack of effort. Thus the rhythm goes on swinging from the *yen* of the Spiritual to the *yan* of the Material. It is so with the fleshly human body; it is so with the contemplative mind. It is so with peoples and nations. It is the elementary law of action and reaction in eternal operation. It has been so with the history of the Tamils.

The Tamils, it is now acknowledged on all hands, are one of the most ancient peoples of the world. Perhaps the antiquity of their civilization was co-existent with that of the Indus Valley people dating to the third or fourth millennium B. C. Their recorded history at least goes back to 2500 years. The earliest work in Tamil now extant is the grammar Tholkappiyam, the date of which is placed generally by scholars around 500 B. C. But Tholkappiyam reveals a civilisation already mature and organised in many ways. It refers to numerous literary works that had existed

before; and postulates that grammar is the distillate of literature, even as oil is of oil seed.³ The literature that went before the grammar of Tholkappiyam should have taken several centuries to evolve.

With Tholkappiyam came the Sangam Age. Of the numerous works that followed, only a handful are left behind. These, however, unmistakably reveal that the Sangam Age, considered the golden age of the Tamils, was largely preoccupied with the building up of the material achievements of life. Love and war formed the main themes of the poets. Ethics no doubt had a place, but was mostly incidental to the main themes. There was no obsession with things of the spirit, no elaborate enquiries of the life hereafter, no metaphysical disquisitions on God and soul. Life ran on a somewhat simple rhythmic course, alternating between the family bosom and the battle field, and in the interval in search of worldly goods within the country and abroad. No heavenly doubts troubled their carefree hearts, such as did the contemporary Upanishad thinkers in the north. The Tamils of the Sangam Age were realists by and large.

Then came Buddhism, and in its wake Jainism, into Tamil land. The slumber of thought was stirred. Ethics and concern with the other world began to change life; and with the State patronage given to these religions, they began to

take an increasing hold on every department of people's lives. The Vedic religion, too, had its influence, but there is no evidence to show that its deeper truths and metaphysical subtleties as yet made that impression on the day-to-day life and conduct of the people that the two protestant religions of Buddhism and Jainism did. The Vedic religion was ever seeking to assimilate and coalesce with the earlier beliefs and cultures whatever they were, and its influence was largely silent and slow. At this time it came mostly in the form of legends and myths, the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, leading the way and working themselves into the beliefs of the people. The thought process they engendered, although permeating a wider layer of humanity, was nevertheless imperceptible. But not so with the two protestant religions. They were highly organised faiths. A host of monks and nuns spread themselves all over the country, worked their way to the seats of power and, with the zeal of neophytes, soon began to change the very thought-pattern of the Tamils. In this endeavour the proselytizers forgot the element of golden mean in the teachings of their founders. The middle path became the extreme path. Religion and denominational ethics dominated the scene. Love became an object of disgust, and war an act of despoliation. Physical valour and indulgence in material pleasures were looked down upon. Begging became a laudable objective, and accumulation

an act of sin. Non-violence was carried to fantastic extremes. Such was the democratic influence of the new ethics, that it assumed the character of pervasive negation. From a predominantly rationalistic attitude towards life leavened by a simple ethics of good conduct, the life of the Tamils of Sangam Age passed into a systematic disparagement of the whole world as total illusion.

It was in times such as this that Thiruvalluvar must have lived. He must have seen the dangers of the situation, the ruin that extreme emphasis on asceticism was spelling to the vitality of a people and to their simple joy of living. He must have been anxious to introduce a balance and restore sanity into life. Yet this could not be done by extolling the virtues of the old to the exclusion of the new. The new gospel had much to teach that was of lasting value. They had taken root in the hearts of men. All that was good in them must be retained, preserved and fostered in the interest of truth and the good of humanity. But they must be placed in their proper perspective and in correct proportions. The vigour of earthly living must be re-enthroned in the hearts of the Tamils, the values of the new teachings receiving their due emphasis. A synthesis of the old and the new was called for. A lesser man than Valluvar, a Neitzche, would have ended up by preaching

a message of hatred and doctrines of an anti-God character.

But the sage and seer that Valluvar was, a poet and a scholar, an Idealist and Realist at once, he produced a body of doctrines that is not only matchless as a work of synthesis in the entire world of literature, but has also acquired a position, unique in transcending time and space. For, the problems he set out to solve are problems eternally recurring-life affirmation and life negation; and the *Kural* that he produced had to be a philosophy as a way of living, and a way of living according to a philosophy. Hence today, the ephemeral in his work is unseen; only the permanent abides. But undoubtedly there must have been an immediate purpose. That must have been achieved either in his own time, or a little later, as great doctrines in those days of slow communication took time to percolate into mass thinking. If it was in the first or second century A. D. that Valluvar lived, it is obvious that his warnings were not taken due note of, and the Tamils had let the holocaust of Kalabhra Interegnum overtake them in the 3rd and 4th century A. D; or, if as some scholars of South Indian History had done, he is placed either during this Dark Age of Tamil History or immediately after, his teachings had largely fulfilled themselves in the restoration of the joy of living for the Tamils during the Pallava

ascendency. Most likely that he lived prior to the Kalabhra invasion, probably he intended his work as a note of warning and an appeal to his countrymen to stir betimes and be up and doing. And the inevitable time lag between postulation of great teachings and their percolation into collective thinking and action had rendered the intervention of the Dark Age possible.

For, it must be remembered, Valluvar's work was intended as an appeal to a wide public. He was not merely a scholar talking to a scholar, but a prophet exhorting his people to a course of action which he considered the most sane for a glorious life. His was a poetry, not written for poetry's sake, nor to extol the virtues and largesses of a patron chieftain in any expectant emotion, as was the fashion in the Sangam Age, and even after, but a poetry with a purpose, a theme with a moral to tell. If in the process he succeeded in the role of the Ancient Mariner and held his 'wedding-guest with the glittering eye of poetry' and 'made him stand still and listen like a three-year child' it was simply that Valluvar had his will. It was the acme of supreme art.' And, so, it was no accident that he chose the couplet verse as the medium of communication. Valluvar was a democrat in thought and form. Democratic thought had to assume a democratic form. And hence was the *Kural* metre chosen. It was a choice, deliberate and purposive. It meant a signal departure from all that had gone before Tamil

poetry. Yet it was the aptest medium of communication for the achievement of the poet's purpose. In that age when literacy by ear was as important as literacy by the eye, memorising played a vital role in the imparting of education; and nothing could aid this audio-education better than a simple couplet, almost as easy to get currency as a housewife's aphorism, and as likely to be effective in the guidance of day-to-day conduct in life. Ten was the number beyond which counting was difficult for the masses, and imprisoning all essential thoughts on a subject within ten couplets was to ensure that nothing worthwhile was missed. The uniformity this form spelt meant some risk to the freedom and excellence of poetical expression. Lesser men who attempted to handle it have later failed. But Valluvar had the supreme confidence of the born poet. He knew what he was about. The medium was but the means to the end. He could choose what medium he willed, and yet make a success of it. The wonder is not that he chose the medium but that he succeeded so well with it. Even the most imaginative poetic thoughts and poetic imageries found no obstruction or hesitation in their free expression. Thought was not sacrificed to Form, neither Form to Thought. The right thought in the right form—an achievement unique in the history of poetry down the ages. Not once does the form flag or begin to stale. In fact, as the work moves

on to the themes of love and war, which ordinarily might have been better expressed in freer and spacious meters, the tiny couplet rises to the occasion and performs ever expensive imaginative feats-a sheer miracle which only a Master Poet could have achieved.

To sum up:

1. For Valluvar, life is an integrated whole. *Thirukkural* is the postulation of philosophy as a way of life and way of living according to a philosophy. It is Pragmatic Idealism.

2. In justifying the demands of the Ideal to the needs of the Pragmatic, Thiruvalluvar knew no contradictions or inconsistencies. The contradictions and inconsistencies are more appearances than real. In this he is in company of the greatest world teachers like Jesus Christ, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi.

3. *Thirukkural* is a work of synthesis. Thiruvalluvar sought to synthesise the two eternal tendencies in human history, life affirmation and life negation.

4. As these two tendencies are eternally recurring in a rhythm all through history, and among all nations and peoples, the synthesis acquires a permanent and pervasive significance.

5. Yet the work must have had an immediate purpose; to lead his people back to a positive

way of life, without losing the values that the negative way of life had to teach.

6. His was a democratic mission. *Kural* was not intended merely for the chosen few. Valluvar was a democrat in life and thought; and *Kural* is democratic in form, content and appeal.

7. The choice of form was deliberate and purposive. It was the one that could best serve the democratic purpose. But it has great limitations as a vehicle of poetical expression, Valluvar risked it in the interest of his democratic cause. But the success he made of it is a miracle in the history of poetical expression. Even the subtlest nuances of emotion and shades of thought and poetical conceits were successfully expressed. A genius alone could do this.

2. Seminal thoughts of Kural

The key to the understanding of an author lies in the Introduction. So much was the importance attached to this part of a work by the later Tamil writers that *Nannul*, the Tamil Grammar, laid down that without Introduction, a book is no book.⁴ however expensive in thought, In fact, in modern times, some writers like Bernard Shaw invested their Prefaces with

such great importance that these were invariably much longer than their works. The main theme of their works did not permit them to express all their basic thoughts on the subject on hand, and so the authors had perforce to seek the elbow room that a Preface provided for a full and free expression of their central thesis. Thiruvalluvar, however, the master that he was of epitomic expression, and he could contain his basic ideas in the first four chapters of Thirukkural which form the *Payiram* or Introduction.

The first chapter is entitled 'Invocation to God' and commences with the argument that even as the letter A is the beginning of all alphabets. God is the beginning of the World. The argument is in the nature of an analogy, and cosmological in character. How else could the existence of God as the beginning of all things be demonstrated? Not by any empirical evidence that is universal. Not certainly by an appeal to authority, for no one authority is acceptable to all. Not by metaphysics. That relies on intuition that cannot be postulated for every one. But the strange thing about Valluvar's argument is it seems to have been addressed to the literate and the learned. His analogy begins with a philological argument. 'A' is the first sound in all alphabets even so God is the beginning of all the worlds.⁵ And again, of what avails all learning, if it does not lead one to the worship

of the Supreme Intelligence?⁶ Perhaps, Valluvar was trying to counter the argument of a school of intellectuals that then existed and who denied God. The common man, then and now, needed no argument for the existence of God. It was ingrained in him as part of a simple traditional belief. These are speculations in which I shall not indulge, however tempting they are. They will distract me away from the immediate purpose of my lectures. Suffice it to say that Tiruvalluvar adopted the belief in the existence of God as a basic postulate of his system of ethics.

Next, Valluvar proceeds to sing of the glories of rain. Why immediately after God? Valluvar is a fundamental thinker. Rains lend the basic support to material life. Without them no vegetation, no life, no prosperity. Rains symbolised the substratum of material life; and unless that is assured, ethics, right living, good life and ordered existence are impossible. History would be at a standstill; man to man would be a wolf. Water is life-giving and so spirit-giving. Rain is the compendious expression of all the economic factors that make for material life. It is the single and most visible element known for life-affirmation. In a sense, this is an acceptance of economic determinism in history, but with Thiruvalluvar economics is not the exclusive determinant, as it was with Marx and other

Materialist Dialecticians. Economics comes only after the spiritual in his scheme of values. Or at best, they are conjoint determinants. Nevertheless with Valluvar economics is an important determinant.

Food is the basis of life. Rain brings food, and itself, as water, forms food.⁷ The world is sustained by it; so is it verily ambrosia.⁸ The consequences of a failure of rain are terrible to contemplate. It would spell disaster and ruin to all economic life. Hunger would stalk the land and torment this wide sea-girt world.⁹ The ploughmen will not plough.¹⁰ Even a pastoral nomadic existence will be impossible. Not even a blade of grass will grow.¹¹ Neither can you exist on sea food; for, even the wealth of the wide sea will be diminished, if the cloud that had drawn its waters up gives them not back again.¹² Will there be any religion left? Neither will there be festivals nor daily worship of the gods.¹³ There will be no charity, no generosity. The milk of human kindness will dry up when the rains dry up. Life cannot exist without water; neither can right conduct.¹⁴

It is not without purpose that the Poet dwells at length on the gruesome consequence of a world in which the rains fail. The picture is vividly drawn to bring home to the reader the importance of a stable economic structure for the peace and progress of the world. As long as hunger gnaws at the door of men, world peace

and progress would be impossible to achieve. Peace and progress are ideals with spiritual content in them; men cannot be led to the spiritual waters and to drink deep in them, when the waters of economic life dry up at the springs. There is a modicum of economic life, on which alone individual morality, as well as social morality, can take root and thrive. Those who preach peace and progress, good conduct and orderly social behaviour to empty stomach may as well preach to the winds. Peace like prosperity is basically economic.

From these basic ideas follow certain important economic tenets. The basis of a stable economic life is rain, because rain furnishes food. Hence, agriculture is the most fundamental economic activity; and lest there should be any doubt on this, Valluvar elaborates it later in the chapter on agriculture. If agriculture is the basic economic activity for all times and climes, that depends on rain, a God's gift as Valluvar might have implied, or a natural resource as economists now term it. On the abundance of this natural resource, therefore, all economic life depends. Natural resources in Valluvar's economic system, thus take the primacy. But among the natural resources, land is given the pride of place in modern economics. For, land is defined to include, not only the soil and the sub-soil, but also the the minerals that are found hidden under the atmosphere above that

embraces the climate and rainfall. This is achieved only by an extension of definition. Valluvar, on the other hand, held water to be the primary natural resource. The abundance and timeliness of water determine even the character of land as a factor of production. There can be a soil-less agriculture, but no moistureless agriculture. And this natural resource has an economy of proportions about it. Excess may spell ruin as timeliness and proper proportion may bring prosperity. It is rain that both ruins and aids the ruined to rise.¹⁵

This resource picture of Valluvar may not be satisfying to the economic planners of today. There is great concern among them now with the mineral resources of a state. That country is considered potentially rich which has a wealth of coal, iron, copper, oil and industrial minerals. Economic growth depends on their rate of exploitation and utilisation. But mineral resources are a part of the land resources by very definition and with Valluvar land resources are a part of the water resources by definition. So Valluvar has not excluded the importance of mineral resources. It is there by implication. The question is only of emphasis. In the ultimate, it is water that matters, for that alone gives food. A stable economy is built on an adequate production of food, not merely its supply. If the supplies have to come from elsewhere, there comes in an element of

dependence and instability. It is well-known that some of the Latin American countries and countries like Saudi Arabia, whose wealth consists chiefly in mineral resources, have experienced the most unstable Governments that the world has witnessed. Revolutions have followed revolutions in quick succession, and Governments have become a hotbed of intrigue, internecine warfare and foreign intervention. Therefore, a self-sufficiency in food is the *sine qua non* of basic stability, strategy and plenty. If this is accepted, as with every new Plan this country's planners themselves increasingly realise, Valluvar's unique emphasis on rains as the greatest single natural resource will be appreciated in all its significance.

The third chapter in the Introduction is entitled 'The Greatness of Ascetics. One commentator—Parithiyar—interprets it as 'The triumph of the Renunciate'. How is this a topic fundamental to a treatise on Social Ethics? And why does it follow a discussion on the importance of material support to life under the title 'In praise of rain?' Even the astute commentator, Parimelazhagar, who usually takes elaborate pains in explaining the sequence of topics and justifying their context, is silent here. His unusual silence demands all the greater reflection on our part.

Next to an adequate economic substratum, what a society requires for its stability, continuity

and progress is Spiritual Leadership. Spiritual leaders are an elect few. They are not the Philosopher-Kings that Plato in his Republic dreamt of. They are men who have given up, what Bentham calls, their 'self-regarding' interests and have given themselves up to 'other-regarding' pursuits, who have renounced all and stand true to their rule of conduct in scorn of consequences.¹⁶ The leadership these souls provide is a spiritual leadership. They are the best—the salt of the earth. Theirs is not a self-abnegation born of an impulse in an odd moment. It is renunciation in a spirit of sacrifice, after having tasted the ways of life according to codes of life prescribed, and after having contemplated and deliberated upon it in the most rational manner. Such renunciation is not a negative act. It belongs to the realm of positive sacrifice. There were men who renounced the worldly ways for other ends. In fact, one commentator, Manakkudavar proceeds to explain that there were works which extolled the greatness of renunciation, if only to cloak men's falsehoods, secretly cherished. Of such is not the spiritual leadership of the world fashioned. They are men whose sacrifice comes as a mellowed fruit of life's duty done. At the commencement of a well regulated life, they seek to control, canalise and sublimate the cravings of the senses into purposeful activity for nobler purposes, for the good of the entire humanity. They withdraw into themselves, so that they may better serve the humanity when

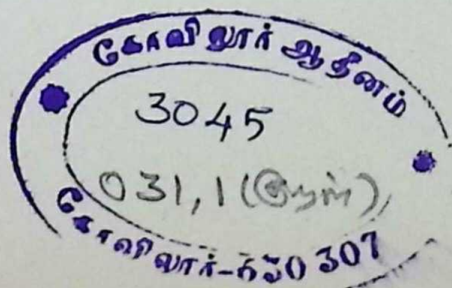
occasion demands. They are introverts, so that they may be better extroverts. They are contemplative individually, so that they may be more active socially. They love themselves less so that they may love humanity more. Their love knows no distinctions of class, creed, time or place. Nay, they love the whole of creation and cherish universal tenderness.¹⁷ These men of sacrifice, the Leaders of the Spirit, in time become a store-house of power, with which they can make even the heaven's king tremble.¹⁸ Their speeches take the character of prophetic utterances. Their words work like *mantra* and can rouse the people to great emotions. They can shape the destinies of men. They shall perform miracles; achieve the impossible.¹⁹ Their wrath when roused, would be volcanic; impossible to resist.²⁰ They alone are the mighty, for they perform mighty deeds. All else in comparison are pygmies, for what these can do are but trifles.²¹ Their greatness is beyond measure; as well try and count all the dead since creation's beginning.²² They stand aloft, towering above all, on the majestic peaks of virtue.²³

The Old Testament is full of such Leaders of the Spirit. They are the prophets who have tried to stir the Jewish nation from time to time, led them away from captivity, and roused them to great achievements even in arid desert surroundings. The Epics and the Puranas are replete with the Rishis of old, before whom

self and power lay prostrate in obeisance. Their influence lasts long after they had left their scene of action. But are those days ended? Have they no place in this scientific age? In our own times, in our own country, Gandhiji was a Rishi of this type. His sense of truth, spirit of sacrifice, and acts of self-abnegation were all of a positive character, calculated to stir the apathy of the Indian masses and lead them on to purposeful activity. His writ ran through the length and breadth of the land, even when the sceptre was held by other hands. His words acted like magic and roused to heroic feats of valour masses of people who lay dazed with power, and paralysed by fear. He performed the greatest miracle, perhaps of all times, when he led three hundred million of his countrymen back to freedom. He made men of them. Nay, more. Such was the chain reaction that his achievement through the vehicle of Spirit started, that in about ten years, over fifty more countries were liberated from the yoke of colonialism to join the ranks of the United Nations as equal members of a great world confederation. The impact of Gandhian spiritual teachings had its reverberation, not only in the countries of Far East Asia, but also on the entire African Continent. Had Valluvar lived today and sought an illustration for his chapter on Greatness of Self-Abnegation, he would have readily seized on the life of the Mahatma. Ultimately, it is the spirit that moves.

The fourth pillar of ordered social life, according to Valluvar, is a code of individual and social conduct that has abiding values. It is compendiously referred to as *Aram* by Valluvar and could be equated in a sense with 'Dharma' in Sanskrit. Dharma has three aspects—one, a moral code of a permanent and universal validity; two, a code which was to be practised in social relations, the social laws, the society's customs, and conventions; and three, the State or Governmental Laws which determine the relationship of man to man in the context of society as a political organism. Valluvar is concerned only with the first of these. The other two are changeable and changing. They have no universal validity. They vary with time and place. But not so the Moral Law. That is permanent and of *universal* applicability. It is this which Valluvar calls *Aram*.

All *Aram* can be epitomised in the single commandment: "Be spotlessly pure of heart."²⁴ This supreme commandment of the code can be spelt out as follows: Avoid envy, lust, wrath and harsh word.²⁵ The observance of this Moral Law—*Aram*—or what the translators have called Virtue and Righteousness is not only a means to an other-worldly end, but to this world also. "It opens the gates of heaven and unlocks the treasures of the earth; then what else does profit more than Righteousness?"²⁶ It is as much important for life-affirmation as for life-negation.



True joy of life flows only from walking in the path of *Aram*. "All else is sorrow and merits no praise."²⁷ *Aram* alone is worthy of practising. Anything else brings infamy and deserves to be avoided.²⁸ It is true that there are moments when the inherent weakness in man tempts him to run away from it. There has to be a struggle within; but the poet understandingly persuades: "Do not postpone practising it. Commence it now and here. Make a resolve. It will be your never failing friend."²⁹ Again, "Do it when there is still breath in you",³⁰ and "Do it as much as possible, and in every way".³¹ Keep the goal always before you. Pursue its spirit wheresoever it guides you.³² Incessant practice will help you in your struggle.

These then are the four cardinal elements of an ordered society: (1) Belief in God (2) Economic resources, (3) Spiritual leadership, (4) Observance of the Moral Law. There is perhaps no order of priority in these four values. They are to coexist and conjointly move as the four wheels of an automobile. Life would be at a standstill when any one wheel gets a flat tyre, and then will follow confusion, anxiety and anarchy.

I have dwelt at some length on these four cardinal postulates of Valluvar, because they pervade his entire thought-pattern. All his economic ideas could be understood in their proper significance only in this background. They embody his

permanent values and whatever he says subsequently have meaning only with relevance to them. They are the key to the understanding of the rest of the *Kural*. The Payiram is not to be skipped over. It holds the master-key to the unlocking of the treasures in the 129 Chapters that follow. It is no accident that a contemporary poet exhorted the reader to learn all the 1330 *Kural* stanzas, in the context of the introduction.³³

What strange assortment of values—God, Economics, Sacrifice and Morals! Yet they are the inevitable products that an attempt at a synthesis of matter and spirit, of life-negation and life-affirmation, bring about. May be there are those who differ from Valluvar; may be there are philosophers who could work out a better synthesis and work out other value patterns. But let them see to it that they have universality and timelessness. Valluvar is no dogmatist. In all humility, he says: "Whatsoever spoken, by whomsoever spoken, discern the truth in it. That is Wisdom."³⁴

3. Economic of Permanance

Some years back, my late lamented friend Dr.J.C. Kumarappa, wrote a book on the 'Economics of

Permanence'. In it he assailed much that is ephemeral in Keynesian economics in particular, and Western Economic thought in general. His main thesis was that modern industrialisation spelt ruin and disaster to human civilisation, and so he proceeded to work out a system on the lines of Gandhian economic thought, by which production is decentralised and problems of distribution automatically taken care of. By Economics of Permanence, it is not to this system I refer here. There are certain abiding permanent economic values that deserve to be maintained, whatever the economic system is, whatever the nature and objective of the economic process is, in any country and at any point of time. Thiruvalluvar has set them out in unmistakable terms. It is to this body of economic doctrines, or rather values, to which I refer mainly below.

Valluvar's economic ideas are mostly to be found in the second part of Thirukkural, the *Porutpal*, or the part dealing with Wealth. By *Porutpal*, Valluvar meant all that Kautilya meant by the word *Arthasastra*. *Porul* literally means, "thing, substance, object, value, wealth, etc." It comprises the whole range of tangible objects that can be possessed, enjoyed and lost, and which we require in daily life for the upkeep of a household, raising of a family, and virtuous fulfilment of life's obligations. It embraces all consumer and producer goods. The arts that

serve the possession of these material goods are economics and politics, the techniques of surviving in the struggle for existence. In a sense, it comprehends the entire science of economic sociology.

In Valluvar's time, economics was not yet a differentiated discipline. It was a part and parcel of politics, or the science of statecraft. It was more political economy than economics. Even in the West, economics did not become a distinct discipline until after the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776. Even then it was only Political Economy, and a part of Moral Philosophy. It is relevant to remember that Adam Smith wrote his classic on Political Economy when he was holding the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. It was not until the days of Alfred Marshall, a century later, that economics became a separate science. But, in our own days, his pupil, Lord Keynes, has begun to question the wisdom of this step and has indicated his preference for going back to the term Political Economy.

As a basic thinker, Valluvar has few peers. He postulates three fundamental freedoms for the individual citizen:

(i) Freedom from hunger, (ii) Freedom from disease, and (iii) Freedom from fear—arising out of aggression from within and without.

Out of these three freedoms, flow all his ideas and ideas of an economic society. "Blessed is the realm that knows no famine or pestilence and is free from aggression."³⁵

"The destruction of the poor is their poverty"—thus began Alfred Marshall, the doyen of classical economists when he set out to lay down his "Principles of Economics." It is the starting point of modern Economics. "The study of poverty is the study of the causes of the degradation of a large part of mankind." Valluvar's ideas on poverty are an elaborate poetical anticipation of Marshall's ideas. With equal emphasis does the Poet condemn the evils of poverty. His was not a philosophy that extolled the virtues of poverty, as many schools of asceticism have done in their attempt to vindicate a life of negation. In ten graphic stanzas, he delineates the horrors of poverty in a manner that makes no mistaking of his faith in the philosophy of life-affirmation. "Nothing is more dreadfully painful than poverty"³⁶ "Internal poverty blasts the joys of the earth and of heaven."³⁷ "Gripping poverty robs a man of the lofty nobility of his descent and the golden eloquence of his tongue."³⁸ "Chill penury benumbs one's noble feelings and makes one speak the language of a slave."³⁹ "Cursed poverty is a nest of evils."⁴⁰ "The deliverance of the poor is only in total renunciation. Far better that, than they batten on other men's salt and soup."⁴¹

If poverty is an unmixed evil, begging is no remedy for it. "It is the height of folly to redress the ills of poverty by begging."⁴² Those who hold that begging is inevitable or decreed by fate are wrong. If so, "may the Creator of the Universe who has decreed so, go abegging and perish."⁴³ Indignation at the very thought that disparities are God-made reaches its climax. Valluvar could not tolerate such doctrines— attempts at laying the doors of God what man has done. For, begging is a denial of the dignity in man, the God in man. "Thou shalt earn thy bread in the sweat of thy brow"—that is what God has ordained, not by begging. "The thin gruel tastes as sweet as ambrosia to him who has earned it in the sweat of his brow."⁴⁴ It is most heinous to beg for a bucketful of water even to quench the feverish thirst of a sinking cow."⁴⁵ "The noble dignity that stoops to base beggary, even in dire want, surpasses the glory and loveliness of earth."⁴⁶

Although Valluvar has painted in these lurid colours the 'Dread of Begging' he was aware that the realities of life sometimes forced this indignity on some unfortunate few; and Valluvar relies on the social conscience of the more fortunate fellow-beings to mitigate the evil. There are circumstances which may make begging permissible; he mentions these; but what he really wishes to emphasise is the social responsibility of the community at large to the

problem of beggary. "Knock at rich men's doors. If they relieve not your wretchedness, the sin is theirs, and not thine."⁴⁷ "Even the beautiful earth becomes an empty puppet show, if the mendicancy that stirs all the springs of pity dies out and is for ever banished."⁴⁸ With gentle sarcasm, the Poet says, "Scowl not at them who give no charity; for who knows they may be as poor and helpless as you."⁴⁹ Those who have no social conscience are as poverty-stricken as the beggars themselves!

But to this social responsibility for begging, Valluvar comes through the individual. He does not spell out the need for any anti-begging legislation, such as might have been thought of in our own days. Not that he excludes legislative action. The fact that he places the theme in the Division which is intended for the instruction of Kings has its own significance for State action. But Valluvar feels that it is the individual values and individual sanctions that ultimately matter, and it is through individual thought and action that the social conscience is really touched. Like Alfred Marshall, he makes a great appeal to the social possibilities of 'economic chivalry.'

Having condemned poverty and begging as the greatest curses of a society, Valluvar proceeds to affirm the importance of accumulation of wealth in a positive manner. "The poor are

for ever held in contempt, the rich are always belauded," for, the wealthy man is like one "who in joy and security witnesses an elephant fight from a secure hill-top, far away from the turmoil."⁵⁰ But it is noteworthy that typical of his integrated philosophy of life, Thiruvalluvar lays equal emphasis on the means of acquiring wealth. Like all economists he holds that wealth is only a means, and not an end. But he insists that the means of acquiring wealth should be not merely legally correct, but also, morally proper. Out of a fortune built up by fair means, flow the joys or earthly felicities and the fulfilment of a virtuous code of conduct."⁵¹ The emphasis here is on the words 'fair means.' Again he says, "Acquire a great fortune by noble and honourable means." This applies even to Governments. There is no compartmental morality in his code. "Let wealth be accumulated by the King on the bedrock of everlasting love and mercy."⁵² Indeed, we are reminded of Alfred Marshall's words again.:

"And very often the influence exerted on a person's character by the amount of his income is hardly less, if it is less than that exerted by the way in which it is earned."

While great store is laid on accumulation of wealth, Valluvar, ever intent on the message that wealth is only a means to an end, condemns excessive parsimony and hoarding of riches.

"Behold a niggard who, in pursuit of gold as an end in, itself, is forgetful of all the blessings that flow from it. He is a very monster born."⁵³ "A hoarder is a burden to the earth."⁵⁴ Such hoards, he designates as 'Profitless Riches'. "He whose wealth is neither for himself nor for others drinks the cup of misery."⁵⁵ He compares hoarded wealth to the fading bloom on the cheeks of a fair lonely maid.⁵⁶ Nay, more. Hoarded wealth can be a source of positive harm. It may work against the common good even as "the fruits of a poisonous tree in the heart of a village."⁵⁷ "A miser is one among the dead; no good comes of him."

An economic society which despises poverty, begging and hoarding and encourages accumulation, consumption, and better distribution must have on the part of its citizens certain moral and spiritual qualities. Valluvar therefore thoughtfully lays his hand on these and elaborates them, one by one, with great poetical power.

First and foremost, Valluvar places the spirit of industry in the individual. He calls it the 'unflagging energy'. It is this, according to him, that marks out the prosperous from the poor. The idle rich are, indeed, the really poor from a social and spiritual point of view.⁵⁸ Industry is real wealth; for the wealth that flows from the restless energy of the soul is the only possession that is lasting. All else fade and

crumble away.⁵⁹ Even in the midst of a setback in fortune, despair does not seize the heart of such men.⁶⁰ There is a touch of grandeur in a man of ambition, even when all his projects are shattered to ruins.⁶¹ Indolent ease can never bring forth great achievements. Inexhaustible fund of energy is man's strength. Lacking it, he is one with stick and stone.⁶² "The stem of the lotus plant is the measure of the water's depth. The energy of an individual is the measure of his achievement."⁶³

So much is Valluvar convinced of the supreme importance of the spirit of industry as the dynamic force behind economic society that he proceeds to work it out in all its implications and shades in three more chapters under the headings "Abstention from Sloth", "Manly Effort" and "Courage in Crisis". Again and again, he cries "Despair not". Industry brings wealth; sloth, poverty. The Goddess of Wealth runs after the man of energy and enterprise, and smiles on his home. For the lazy and the indolent there is a different visitor—the she-devil of poverty.⁶⁴ Leave no work unfinished. The world will not forgive you. It will turn its back on you.⁶⁵ Scorn delights and live laborious days. You shall become a tower of strength to society.⁶⁶ To lack resources is no disgrace; but to sit idle is a vile reproach.⁶⁷ Labour is the greatest resource.⁶⁸ The plans and programmes of one who lacks

the will to translate them are but day-dreams. They are as ineffectual as the sword in the hands of a coward.⁶⁹ To him is not given the noble pride of a benevolent heart.⁷⁰ "Yield not to despair," he again exhorts. Cry not in distress: 'The task is beyond me'. Put forth your manly efforts. They will rouse your slumbering courage, and you shall achieve the most arduous tasks of life.⁷¹ Forgetfulness, procrastination, sloth and lazy sleep are frail canoes. Man voyaging in them gets wrecked in trackless waters.⁷² Idleness is a viper. Out of it spring the ruins of the society.⁷³

Life, Valluvar realises, is an unceasing struggle, and for that struggle, the individual requires to be fully equipped. Temporary setbacks should not be allowed to paralyse human effort. What is needed is a "well-bred bull's energy." Even as it struggles its way through the ups and downs of the rugged terrain, so do you pull through thick and thin, come hail, come storm.⁷⁴ Smile scornfully at the frowns of fortune. That is the only way to chase leaden-eyed despair.⁷⁵ Against the shores of iron will and unflagging courage, the never-ending waves beat in vain.⁷⁶ Find joy in the very stress and strain of work. You shall vanquish all opposition.⁷⁷

All these remind us so much of the words of one of the greatest economists of our own times, the late Lord Keynes, on energy versus

prudence as the driving force behind development of wealth: "Most probably, many of our decisions to do something positive, the full consequences of which will be drawn over many years to come, can only be taken as a result of animal spirits—of a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction. Thus if the animal spirits are dimmed and the spontaneous optimism falters. enterprise will soon fade and die."

These are some broad hints we have of Valluvar's economic philosophy. Valluvar himself never worked out an economic system in all its elaboration. He was no system builder. A work of synthesis is bound to be somewhat eclectic in approach and general in treatment. But we have sufficient evidence to catch a glimpse of the constituents of an ideal economic society as Valluvar saw it.

The most important economic activity, according to Thiruvalluvar, is agriculture. This was not because the poet was living in a predominantly agricultural society, but because it is the most fundamental activity for all time. Food is the basis of life; and raising food is the primary occupation of mankind. "Husbandmen are the axle-pin of the world; for on their prosperity revolves the prosperity of the other sectors of the economy."⁷⁸ Even saints who have forsaken the world's needs must cease

from spiritual pursuits, were farmers to sit idle with folded arms.⁷⁹ "You may pursue other walks of life; but ultimately you must be back to the plough; for that alone is the primary occupation."⁸⁰ That country which has a peasantry, whose fields rustle with thick waves of corn becomes the refuge of several other countries."⁸¹

In thus stating the primacy of agriculture, it will be recalled, Valluvar is only particularising and illustrating the second of the four foundation ideas he postulated in the chapter on "Rains" in the Payiram or Introduction. He was concerned to establish that material support is essential for a life of positive living and that under the ultimate 'principle of rain,' agriculture assumes a basal character. All this he has done even at the start. Here, however, Valluvar introduces one further argument in favour of the importance of the agricultural sector. Agriculture alone is the most independent vocation. "The ploughmen alone", he says, "live as the freemen of the soil; the rest are mere slaves that batten on their toil."⁸² It may be, under various forms of State Trading and controls, this is not true of many economies of the world today. It certainly is not true of the economies where the ploughmen have become tractor-men and with it the wage-slaves of the State. But Thiruvalluvar's ideal,—and perhaps that was the actual position in

his days — appears to be an agricultural sector untrammelled by state intervention. In other words, Valluvar was for free enterprise in agriculture, and he valued highly the economic freedom it confers. "A peasant, who toils in the sweat of his brow, begs not at other men's doors but ungrudgingly shares his bread with those that beg for alms."⁸³

Such was his concern for a well developed agriculture, that Valluvar deviates here from his practice of formulating only the broad general truths. He proceeds to lay down certain detailed agricultural techniques and farming practices, which he considers highly important for a successful agriculture. Valluvar considers that the preparation of the soil is the first and foremost step. Land should be so ploughed and then exposed to the sun that the soil is completely aerated. The idea seems to be that it will then be in a position to receive and absorb the nitrogen and other organic elements from the atmosphere. Also, the weeds will have been destroyed at the roots. This can be done by intense and repeated ploughing. "Behold the land that is allowed to dry, until an ounce of earth crumbles into a quarter ounce of dust. She needs no manure and her harvest would be rich and abundant."⁸⁴

He then proceeds to set out other important cultural practices in some order of importance

Ploughing is no doubt important, but even more so is manuring, and having manured, weeding assumes importance; and then irrigation; and above all, guarding the crop.⁸⁵ Land is a natural resource, which responds in proportion to the efforts put into it. The size and combination of inputs can overcome the inherent soil limitations. There is no such thing as a land unfit for cultivation. "Dame Earth seems to smile regretfully at the idle sons of the soil who put in no efforts and plead poverty."⁸⁶ He also recognises the importance of measures for control of floods, pests, and diseases, hail and storm and other natural calamities.

It is evident that the type of land tenure that Valluvar visualised was one of peasant proprietorship. That accorded with his basic demand for economic liberty of the individual, and the qualities of industry and enterprise demanded of every citizen. He was not in favour of absentee landlordism. "As sulky and sullen as a woman abandoned of her lord is the land abandoned of her owner."⁸⁷

Could it be that Valluvar was an anticipator of the Physiocrats of the eighteenth-century France? The Physiocrats held that land alone produced a net product, and agriculturists alone were the productive class. The artificers, manufactures and merchants were, according to

this school, an unproductive class. Explaining their theory, Adam Smith wrote:

"The unproductive class, that of merchants, artificers and manufacturers is maintained and employed altogether at the expense of the two other classes, of that of proprietors, and of that of cultivators. They furnish both with the materials of its work and with the fund of its subsistence, with the corn and cattle which it consumes while it is employed about the work. The proprietors and cultivators finally pay both the wages of all the workmen of the unproductive class, and the profits of all their employers."

There is more than one stanza in Valluvar's chapter on Agriculture which seem to anticipate the Physiocratic ideas above quoted. The chapter opens with the statement that agriculture is superior to all other avocations. "Whirl as the world will, it must after all rely on the plough. Therefore agriculture is the most important of all industries."⁸⁸ Again in the next couplet he says "Husbandmen are the lynch-pin of society, for they support all those that take to other work, not having the strength to plough."⁸⁹ These two stanzas can be interpreted as attempts to establish the primacy

and superiority of agriculture over other professions. But it is when we come to the third verse that we see something very close to the Physiocratic doctrine. Valluvar says, "who ploughing eat their food, they truly live. The rest to others bend subservient, eating what they give."⁹⁰ Is this the same as what Adam Smith said of the Physiocratic doctrine above?

"Those workmen and their employers are properly the servants of the proprietors and the cultivators. They are only servants who work without doors, as menial servants work within. Both the one and the other, however, are equally maintained at the expense of the same master. The labour of both is equally unproductive."

We should be careful in reading too much of latter day thoughts into Valluvar. The Physiocrats, it should be remembered, were removed above 18 centuries from Valluvar's stream of economic thought. It is true both describe those engaged in non-agricultural pursuits as 'servile or servants'. But to me it appears that they mean quite different things. The Physiocrats held that agriculture alone was the 'productive' occupation and so compared the people engaged as artificers, manufacturers and merchants to 'servants' who in their concept did not produce anything 'tangible' in value. The concept of value as embracing both goods

and service had not entered into economic thought yet. Even Adam Smith who enters into a caveat with the Physiocrats at this point does not refute their main value thesis. The other sectors are still 'unproductive'. "The industry of merchants, artificers and manufacturers, though in its own nature altogether unproductive, yet contributes in this manner indirectly to increase the produce of the land." Therefore, "The unproductive class, however, is not only useful, but greatly useful to the other two classes(proprietors and cultivators of land)."

This, however, does not appear to be the sense in which Valluvar was employing the word 'servant' or 'servile' or 'sub-servient' (in whatever terms it is translated) as applied to those who are engaged in avocations other than agriculture. There is no suggestion that what they produced had no value, or that their pursuits are 'unproductive'. All Valluvar meant to convey, it appears to me, was the basic dependence of all on agriculture for their food requirements and hence the supreme importance of investing it with primacy among the human activities, and fostering it with care. The others are 'subservient' in the sense that they all have to depend on growers of food in the ultimate analysis. The economic freedom of the grower of food is basic; that of others only derived. For, Valluvar was not living in a primitive or pastoral society. In

his days, Tamil land had reached a high degree of material civilisation—a developed agriculture, a variety of arts and manufactures, and a brisk foreign trade with distant Greece and Rome. The Sangam literature, in particular the works like Pattinappalai and Purananuru, bear ample references to the advanced stage of the arts and crafts. It is in a milieu of all these advances in the arts and technique of industry and trade that Valluvar held that agriculture has the pride of place among economic activities.

Why was this? Historically, the Physiocratic doctrine of the elevation of agriculture as the only source of 'net product' arose as a reaction to Colbert's excessive encouragement to trade and manufacture to the neglect of land. Was there such a reaction in Valluvar's days? That would be assuming that history should repeat itself and produce unerring parallels—a thesis which is not warranted. But perhaps there was a period when the neglect of agriculture in Tamilnad was serious, the taxes on land extortionate, and the oppression of the peasantry severe. There are references in the Sangam literature to farmer-poets exhorting the kings to keep their oppressive hands off the peasantry.⁹¹ There might have been recurrent famines, floods and pestilence and periodical food shortages. It was in times such as these that Valluvar might have lived; and it is likely that the great achievements of the Chola Emperor Karikala

who was either contemporaneous with Valluvar, or might have immediately followed him,—this Tamil Emperor's achievements in the field of land reclamation, colonisation, construction of dams, and other far-reaching works of agricultural development felt the impact of Valluvar's thoughts. This, however, is for the historian of South India. All that I can say is, we shall take care before we label fundamental thinkers like Valluvar, who start from first principles, as Physiocrats and Agricultural Fundamentalists. The Physiocrats of France set agriculture against industry; the Agricultural Fundamentalists in the United States pitted the rural against urban society. Valluvar, we shall ever remember, came to reconcile, harmonise and synthesise. Schools he had none, systems he did not build, and sentiments he cherished few. He was a philosopher who went down to the grass roots and spanned his thoughts over the arc of eternity.

The self-same spirit of caution should inform the critic in interpreting Valluvar's indictment of hoarding and excessive parsimony elaborated under the rubric 'Profitless riches'. It is easy to fall into the temptation of finding a kinship between Valluvar's ideas and the over-saving and under investment theories of later day economists like Rev. Malthus, J. A Hobson and John Maynard, Keynes, and exclaim how very modern Valluvar is! Such temptations must be resisted. For, the contexts are entirely

different. The modern theories of over-saving and under-investment are born of the analysis of a particular economic situation and at a particular point of time. There is nothing of the moral flavour about these theories when they are offered as solutions to the unclogging of the economic mechanism. Valluvar, on the other hand, had all along the moral values in the background. When he condemns hoarding, miserliness, the doctrine assumes the attributes of seminality and timelessness about it. It is always wrong to hoard; and that because it clogs the springs of charity. Perhaps ultimately the doctrines of both, Valluvar and the neo-classical economists arrive at the same point and same goal, namely, welfare through better consumption and better production. And in the case of men like J. A. Hobson the social purpose so much dominated the purely objective economic analysis, that for a long time he was not taken seriously by the professional economists. In a social science like economics, it is impossible to distinguish in its theories what is purely a social goal and what is purely an economic goal. They do not conflict with each other. They inter-mingle like milk and water, difficult to separate. Good ethics is also good economics. In Valluvar it is so. All that we have to see is that the standpoints are different, the thinking process different, the tools too; but not the goal.

Not that Valluvar does not encourage thrift, or that he sings the paeon of praise of extravagance. Ever intent on striking a golden mean, Valluvar warns, "Give; always give; but let your giving be governed by your resources. Be thrifty, but not to verge on miserliness." "Let your charity be proportionate to your wealth. That is the way to preserve it."⁹² Again, "Behold the man who lavishes his wealth beyond his resources; he appears to be prosperous, but he only treads the downward path to destruction."⁹³ And finally, 'Generosity, which is blind to its resources, perishes of its own accord.'⁹⁴ If it were permissible to translate his ideas in modern economic language, we should say, Valluvar was for a balance in all things.

4. Factors of Production

Land, labour and capital—these were the three agents of production according to classical economics. Alfred Marshall at the end of the nineteenth century, added a fourth factor, organisation or knowledge to include the activities of the entrepreneurs who had come to play a crucial role in an industrially advancing free enterprise economy. Valluvar classifies the agents of production in a somewhat different

manner. An unfailing harvest, a competent body of men and a group of men whose wealth knows no diminution—these three he considers to be the important ingredients of an economic society.⁹⁵

It is significant to note that Valluvar's emphasis is on the end-product of land rather than on land itself. There are other elements required to make land yield a harvest: rain or water to which he has given so much prominence even at the outset of his work, other inputs like ploughing, manuring, weeding, watching etc., all of which he works out in detail in his chapter on Agriculture. He is not obviously thinking of the mineral wealth that lies buried in the land and of its exploitation. In a simple economic society, they were obviously secondary. The greatest natural resource he repeats is water, the rain, the surface flow in rivers and brooks, and the subsoil water that can be "tapped through wells. He was concerned to point out the ultimate base of an economic society, and that is the raising of food. That activity depends on an interaction of a variety of agents, of which land is one, though an important one. In fact the phrase *தள்ளா விளையுள்* meaning 'never-failing harvest' has been interpreted by some commentators as referring to a class of ever persevering peasantry.⁹⁶ If this is accepted, Valluvar was thinking more in terms of the human agents of production, rather than the

natural agents; for, the other two agents of economic activity are referred to only in terms of the human factor, namely, "a body of competent men, and a group of wealthy men". In the last analysis, organised economic society is a product of human endeavour. This is what distinguishes it from primitive societies in a 'state of nature'. This Human Factor is resolvable into three important classes in the population. They are the vital agents of economic activity—those who raise food, the body of competent men, and the men of capital.

Who are these "body of competent men?" The translation of தக்கார் as "a body of competent men" is my own. The traditional commentators have interpreted it variously. Parimelazhagar identifies them with the sages or ascetics, the chosen few practising self-negation.⁹⁷ This no doubt accords with Valluvar's hypothesis postulated at the outset in the Introduction under the title of "Greatness of men of renunciation". The men of sacrifice and spirit are a crucial element to the stability of a society. Lest there should be any doubt on this, the acute commentator thoughtfully adds: இதனால் அழிவின்மை பெறப்பட்டது That is, by postulating this class the continuity of the society is assumed.

Other commentators, however, give the word தக்கார் a more direct signification.

Manakkudavar simply says, the 'men of competence'. Paripperumal construes it as 'those of power, family and character'. Kalingar, as 'men with a fitting education and knowledge'. Perhaps it includes all these ideas, for the men of renunciation and self-abnegation are also men of character, learning and wisdom. In a purely economic sense, however, the modern term 'knowledge' which is a recent substitute for the earlier, word 'organisation' of the classical economists can connote this, but there is a difference. By 'knowledge' what economists of the present day largely mean is the technological and organisational knowledge required for the production activities of a modern society. Valluvar's 'men of knowledge' தக்கார் were something more than this. They were men who by diverse ways—knowledge and character, wisdom and sacrifice—worked for the stability and continuation of the society. That is a more fundamental concept.

Valluvar again does not refer to Capital in the abstract as a creative agent in an economic society. Rather, he refers to the men of wealth—the capitalists as such—if we may so call them. Some commentators would have this to mean the rich merchant princes who acquire wealth through internal and external commerce. Others would put a more qualitative construction and would have it as the rich who never relax in their acts of giving and whose

wealth remains undiminished, and so on. Whatever be the interpretation, Valluvar was again thinking in terms of the human element in the accumulation of capital. The classes for him were basic, the class of agriculturists, the class of men of knowledge and character and the class of capital owners. These were three distinct and separate elements of his economic society. It is obvious that the economic society of Valluvar's time had already reached a certain degree of complexity in which division of labour and specialisation of functions had attained a stratification in terms of classes, who, for short, may be called 'The Agriculturists', 'The Intellectuals' and 'The Capitalists'. Indeed this identification of the factors of production with the human agents responsible for activating these factors is a practice that has been adopted by the classical economists, including Karl Marx, until the advent of Marginal school of economists on the scene. In Marx's hands this identification became a powerful tool for the postulation of class war doctrine; and it was a realisation of the dangers of this that made the Marginalists dissociate the human aspect from the factors of production and think in terms of disembodied land, labour and capital.

What about Labour as a factor of production? To me it appears the term *தூக்கார்* interpreted severally as a body of competent men, men of knowledge, character and family, men of sacri-

fice and learning, etc., may well have been used in a comprehensive sense to include both 'labour' and 'organisation' or 'knowledge'. The notion that labour is a separate category was born only since the advent of the Industrial Revolution where the producers of good were diverced from the means of production. In a comparatively simple economic society such as that in which Valluvar lived, the workers were also the entrepreneurs or the men of 'knowledge' in the economic sense. The word துக்கார் interpreted as an economic category can then be identified with two factors of production—labour and organisation—rolled in-to one.

5. Public Finance

In the fiscal sphere Valluvar assigns to the State the essential functions of Public Finance, namely, creation of revenues, collection of revenues, management (guarding) of revenues, and public expenditure.⁹⁸ In modern Public Finance these four functions may be equated with the three categories: Public Income, Financial Administration, and Public Expenditure, the functions of collection and 'guarding' of revenues being now comprehended under the single title of Financial Administration.

Valluvar lists three main heads of Public Revenues (i) உறுபொருள் (ii) உல்குபொருள் (iii) தெறுபொருள்.⁹⁹ Commentators differ widely on their meaning. Parimelazhagar interprets உறுபொருள் as the wealth of heirless estates.¹⁰⁰ Both Manakkudavar and Paripperumal first give merely the literary meaning, 'Wealth that comes by itself.' But by way of further explanation, Manakkudavar gives the meaning காவற்பொருள் that is fee or tax levied for defence. (This, however, is not found in one of the palm leaf manuscripts): and Paripperumal goes back to Parimelazhagar's rendering of escheats. Parithiyar and Kalingar, however, deviate from these three. The former would have it as the 'taxes from the subjects', and the latter 'the just dues the subjects pay.'

Apparently there was a conflict among some of the commentators—all of whom are much later to Valluvar—as to whether the Ruler is really the heir to escheats, and they seized the occasion to give vent to their own ideas on the subject; for, it is doubtful if escheats by themselves can ever form a major head of State revenues. Parimelazhagar, conscious of this objection as it were, adds another category, namely, treasures hidden under the earth and discovered long after the owner has passed away. But even this addition cannot constitute a source of revenue that can rank as a major head. Both these are quite minor and

irregular sources of State income. The major source of income for States in India has always been the land revenue, the traditional one-sixth of the produce. This has been so well established in the minds and beliefs of the Indian peoples by successive law givers from time immemorial, that its payment became a part of the normal duties of every citizen—in fact it has been called a *kadamai* or duty. The psychology of the taxpayer has been so conditioned by tradition that this tax had lost all connotation of compulsoriness about it. It had become an involuntary payment. Custom did the work of law. Manakkudavar seems to explain that this was so, because land revenue was in the nature a of payment for the security the State confers on the subjects. So it was ungrudgingly, voluntarily paid. Hence was it உறுபொருள் the wealth that comes of its own accord. The expression also conveys the sense of legitimacy—உறு or உற்ற, that which is due.

For, Valluvar was against any undue compulsion in taxation. His famous dictum in this context is worth repeating. "The King who extorts money at the point of the spear is like a highway man, who waylays the benighted traveller with his menacing cry—'Stand and deliver.'¹⁰¹ It is significant that Valluvar did not refer to the traditional one-sixth or lay down any other unvarying proportion of the produce as land tax. There were times when the state of harvest

did not permit the one-sixth. Even so, some payment was voluntarily made. If Parimelazhagar were allowed to have his own way in this context, he would not only have denied the State of an important source of revenue that has been the mainstay of the State fisc for ages, but would also have ignored the built-in voluntary concept of Valluvar in matters of taxation. It must, however, be said in fairness to this astute commentator that he takes care to add, 'the one-sixth share of produce being taken for granted, only the additional sources are mentioned etc.'¹⁰² Thus he knew land revenue could not be ignored.

The next major head of State's resources is உல்கு or customs. This term உல்கு seems to be the same as the Sanskrit word कलकु or कङ्कम्. The latter Tamil word seems to be a corruption of கல்கம். This tax head, the commentators say, refers to the duties levied on commerce both by water and road—import and export duties as well as internal customs duties. Obviously, in Tamilnad at the time of Valluvar, trade and commerce were important activities and they yielded considerable revenues by way of customs. The Chola kings at the port of Kavirippumpattinam had their merchandise chopped with their tiger insignia to make sure that the goods did not escape duty.

The third source of revenue to the State was the tribute paid by the vanquished enemies.

This again has been considered a legitimate source of revenue all through history. In modern times this is represented by 'reparations.'

The term 'creation of public revenues' has been interpreted by some in a modern sense. They hold that Valluvar had in mind the concept of State engaging directly in productive activities or what is now known as State or Public Enterprises. Although there is no direct evidence for such inference, it is possible that the ruler in those days had his demesne or Crown lands and the proper management and husbanding of its resources was laid down as an important duty of the state. The expression 'creation' however, carries a different signification. By 'creation', Valluvar presumably meant that the State should constantly be doing all that is necessary to 'create' those conditions by which the yield from the major heads of revenue increases naturally and automatically. The nurturing and fostering of the taxable capacity of the population was laid down as a prime concern of the sovereign in the sphere of Public Finance. It is this which Valluvar must have had in his mind rather than starting and running of Public Enterprises, although the latter is not to be excluded. The creation of taxable capacity, indeed, is the hall-mark of any progressive economy.

The modern theory of Public Expenditure makes a distinction between Government and a private

person. A Government, it is contended, need not at all times equate its expenditure with the revenues. The expenditure may well exceed the revenues, for the State is an entity with a time continuum. Not so the private person. And there are economists who even advocate a continuous deficit budgeting year after year—a course of action which they do not permit for the individual.

What are Valluvar's ideas on this? Valluvar had for his ideal a society that generated current surplus and had built up a sizeable reserve. If such a surplus were not possible, let income and expenditure at least level. "It is not a great misfortune for a State if its revenues are limited, provided the expenditure is kept within bounds." He seems to accord with Dickens: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds and six, result misery." Again, he warns, "Behold the monarch who lavishes his wealth beyond his resources; he appears prosperous, but he only treads the downward path to destruction." Valluvar, no doubt, considers balancing of the budget as important for the State as for the individual. His guiding principles of a sound budgetary policy appear to be these: "Budget for a surplus, if possible; balance the budget at other times; but never budget for a deficit."

Modern budgetary theory may not accept such a rigid stand. There is one school which holds that while the budget need not be balanced in any particular year, there should be a balancing over a period of years. On this principle, there are those who advocate balancing the budget over the period of a trade cycle. Whatever the position, it is undeniable that no State can for ever go on running into large deficits. Sooner or later, the reckoning will come. Enormous public debt accumulates. Some then face the situation by a repudiation of debts, others by change of Government, still others by losing their economic, and eventually even political independence. The abandonment of the traditional concept of a balanced budget as a goal in itself, and the use of fiscal instruments of public expenditure and taxation to achieve economic stability are not the products so much of virtue as of necessity. The complexity of the modern economic phenomena, and the cyclical movements in a capitalist economy have been responsible for this change in attitude. Even so, it is admitted that when business is at a relatively high level and prices are stable a balanced budget is satisfactory and may even be preferred. This is the ideal which Valluvar was looking for.

The use of the term வகுத்தல் (vahuttal) by Valluvar in the context of Public Expenditure has again given rise to speculations. Some read into

Valluvar the modern notion that the task of Distribution is a basic function of the State. While it is true that all Public Expenditure results in distribution, it is not clear whether Valluvar held any theories about it, except that public funds must flow into useful channels, according to his over-all concept of ethics. Parimelazhagar goes into some detail pursuing his own ideas on the subject. He divides Public expenditure into three parts, (vide commentary on *Kural* 385) one part to be expended according to the ethical code or *Aram*, that is the expenditure to be incurred on Gods, holy men and the poor, as well as on the acquisition of name and glory; the second part to be spent on the basic needs of the polity such as on the army, the fort, and other items of defence, as well as on diplomacy. What may be called aid funds are included in this as keeping away certain groups from joining the enemy or tempting certain other groups to secede from the enemy; the third part to be spent on items of what Parimelazhagar calls 'Pleasure' or 'those which cater to the senses' such as, building of public halls and shelters, provision of water supply and irrigation works, building of parks and artificial hillocks. In short, according to this commentator, Public Expenditure broadly falls into (1) Defence, (2) Public Works, (3) Social Services.

Both Manakkudavar and Paripperumal, however, restrict the scope of Public Expenditure to

defence and military purposes. Kalingar, although he does not give details, holds that Public Expenditure must comprehend the expenditure to be incurred both within and without the country. On the whole, however, it appears that Parimelazhagar's three-fold divisions of Public Expenditure appears satisfactory, although the contents and details of each of the divisions may vary from time to time in an economy. It betokens much more than a laissez faire notion of the State's role and quite unlike the views of Manakkudavar and Paripperumal who would reduce the State to a grand Policeman. On the other hand, in commenting on another couplet, both these commentators go further to extend State's activities. They consider that when in need the peasantry should be given assistance in kind by way of seed, manure, plough etc. They advocate moratorium and reduction of taxes. Parimelazhagar advocates permanent remission of taxes.

By all accounts, therefore, from an economic point of view, Valluvar's concept is nearer that of a Welfare State, if not of a Paternalistic one. Where the just king is equated with the very gods,¹⁰³ it is a far far cry from the state of laissez faire. Such is the importance Valluvar attaches to good Government as a precondition for economic progress that he opens the division on '*Porutpal*' or 'Economics' with a statement of the cardinal features of sound administration.

6. The Triple Freedoms

Next to a sound administration, Valluvar looks upon education as basic to a progressive economy. In fact, both Manakkudavar and Parip-perumal proceed to explain Valluvar's chapter-sequence thus: "Valluvar proceeds to examine the various factors that promote economic progress and so places education in the fore-front."¹⁰⁴ This seems to fit in with Valluvar's own ideas, when he says "Learning is an imperishable and flawless wealth; the rest is mere dross."¹⁰⁵ Valluvar undoubtedly knew the importance of knowledge as an essential factor of production—an infrastructure as we now call it. Education has universal value and utility. "Behold a scholar who is a mine of wisdom; there is not a land which is not his own; there is not a country which is not his own; wherefore ye men should abandon learning unto the last close of life's taper?" he asks. Knowledge is a limitless ocean and education an unending process.¹⁰⁶ Not only does he emphasise the positive importance of acquiring knowledge, but he also warns in a whole chapter the negative results arising from uninstructed possession of wealth. "The wealth in the hands of the ignorant brings more ills in its trail than the poverty of the wise."¹⁰⁷ He sees in education a great force for social levelling up. "Men of learning, though born of low descent, command more reverence than a high

born fool."¹⁰⁸ It is in education alone that he sees the driving force that makes for progress; for, "it is that which distinguishes man from the beast."¹⁰⁹

Next to education, Valluvar sets great store by a proper system of public health services as part of his socio-economic policy. It has been seen that 'freedom from diseases' is ranked by him as one of the basic freedoms of man and that next only to freedom from hunger. He would not let his ideal state to fall a prey to epidemic diseases; and such was his concern for a society with a sound public health that Valluvar devotes a whole chapter to 'medicine'. In this he lays emphasis on the preventive and nutrition aspects of health. "Foods, excessive or deficient, brings about disease."¹¹⁰ "The secret of longevity is to eat with moderation, after what you ate had been well digested."¹¹¹ "In-compatible diet is the root of many diseases."¹¹² "Always wait for a keen appetite before you proceed to sit for a dinner."¹¹³ These and other practical rules of guidance are set out by him with great earnestness. The science of medicine in his days was apparently a comprehensive discipline dealing with the patient, physician, the medicine and the male nurse. Valluvar fully recognises the importance of proper diagnosis in his system of medical treatment, the individual condition of the patient, and the appropriate timing of medication.

Other evils that do harm to the socio-economic life of a society according to Valluvar are drinking, gambling and prostitution. These have been regulated and legislated upon in varying degrees by the Governments of the world at different periods in history. In the Gandhian era, prohibition as a socio-economic policy has been written into the very Constitution of our Government. There is little doubt whatever that it would have gladdened Valluvar's heart.

An economic society which can guarantee the three basic freedoms of Valluvar comes very near to what Prof. Gailbraith calls the 'Affluent Society.' Such a society should have ample accumulation or enormous surplus reserves. Currently also it must produce a surplus adequate to absorb the shocks of all temporary losses arising from failure of rains or attack of pests. It should have the staying power to stand up to a sudden inrush of demand on its resources, and even then be in a position to raise all the resources needed from current income. The secret of a sound defence line is its impregnable economic foundation, says Valluvar. It should be so strong that it repels all thoughts of foreign aggression; and even if a country's security is shaken for a while, it should possess the potential for a quick revival. "That alone is a country which has not to seek external resources. That is no country which has to depend on external

resources."¹¹⁴ In modern economic parlance, what Valluvar sought as the ideal was a self-sufficient, self-generating and self-propelling economy. (The expression நாடா வளத்தன் has been interpreted traditionally as "not having to work for;" rather, it should mean "that which does not depend on external aids;" "that which is self-generating.")

Such an economic society is distinguished by five prominent features- immunity from diseases, ample wealth, adequate food resources, a high standard of living, and an unfailing defence.¹¹⁵ There are three things that he banishes from his economic society for ever; gnawing hunger, chronic diseases, and perpetual insecurity. "A kingdom is that which continues to be free from excessive starvation, irremediable epidemic and destructive foes."¹¹⁶ Internal security is no less important than the external. "It should be free from warring sects, internal dissensions and murderous traitors." Above all, there should be amity and concord between the ruler and the ruled, "Though blessed with all the varied gifts" a land gains nought that is not with its king at peace."¹¹⁷ For Valluvar as with Adam Smith, defence was more important than opulence.

It is obvious that the Economic Society which Thiruvalluvar visualised was one based on faith

in earthly possessions and the will to acquire them. It was a virile dynamic society with its roots deep in industry, enterprise and the perservance of its citizens, with a love of riches and consumption of worldly goods, hatred of poverty, begging, hoarding and indolence. While the need for a perpetual struggle in the face of odds as the *sine qua non* for success receives great emphasis, what Valluvar delineates is not a society where every one is for himself and the devil takes the hindmost—such as was pictured by some economists, about the capitalism of the early 19th century, and which brought it into contempt of men like Ruskin and earned for it the odium of the Science of Mammon. The Economic Society of Valluvar's choice is to be informed by a vigilant social consciousness, a code of basic moral values and sound welfare principles. It is too much to read into Valluvar all that in modern times is meant by the welfare society. Valluvar seems to have relied on the individual values more than on State action for the translation of the welfare principles into programmes of action; for it is the ideas and aspirations, sanction and participation of the individuals that ultimately count for the emergence and success of corporate State action. Without these conditions obtaining on the part of individuals, no welfare society could last long. It is on this perennial aspect that Thiruvalluvar laid real stress.

7. Estimate of Valluvar

I shall attempt at an estimate of Valluvar as a fundamental economic thinker. Indeed he has often been compared with the Buddha and Christ, but that is relevant only in the sphere of the spirit, in his role as a teacher of perennial ethical values. For both Buddha and Christ were primarily concerned with things of the other world—Nirvana and the Kingdom of God, and the ordering of the individual way of life to achieve this goal. They came to teach the autonomy of the spirit from worldly events, and the burden of their message was the elevation of souls, not the organization of society. Economics, if any, in their teachings was largely incidental. With Christ it even appears to be neutral. "Render unto Ceasar what is Ceasar's and unto God what is God's." For a true appreciation of the contribution of Valluvar in the field of economics, therefore, we should turn to those teachers who had devoted their attention to the earthly aspect of man's well-being.

I have taken for comparison three representative schools of thought: the Greek, the Sanskrit and the Modern. The representatives of the Greek scholars are Plato and Aristotle, whose writings and thinking set the pattern of western economic thought for over 20 centuries till the dawn of Industrial Revolution.

Although Aristotle was the pupil of Plato, it is well-known that the differences between the master's *Republic* and the pupil's works on *Ethics* and *Politics* were so great that they deserve separate treatment. Among the Sanskrit writers, the name that comes uppermost is that of Kautilya or Chanakya, the celebrated author of the *Arthasastra*; and among the Moderns, the claim for comparison may well be given to Adam Smith, the author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

In thus attempting an evaluation, I have kept in mind one basic principle of analysis, namely, that in economics as elsewhere, most statements of fundamental facts acquire importance only by the superstructure they are made to bear; and are commonplace in the absence of such superstructure. I have looked upon the ideas of the ancient writers as mostly basic in character, as at best 'scientific splinters of economic thought' and any comparison is valid only when looked at from this point of view. Above all, I have tried my best not to fall into the error of hailing as a discovery everything in Valluvar's ideas that suggests later developments or of making comparisons without relevance to the times and environments in which the different thinkers lived and had their being. With these brief remarks to serve as a defensive mechanism, I shall now turn to Plato first.

Plato's vision of an ideal state is given in his *magnum opus*, the *Republic*. This is usually

classed among the utopias or imaginative works embodying certain ideals. The Germans class them as 'State Novels'. Plato's was the first of these State Novels. It is a vision of an artistic creation of a Perfect State, not at all based on empirical experience or economic analysis. This Perfect State was small in size, something of the City State, stationary in population and wealth. Life in it was strictly regulated by a caste system permanently and rigidly organised. In it wealth is limited and freedom of speech restricted. It has been described by some as the prototype of a corporate or fascist State. The ideal States pictured by Plato and Valluvar are as different as chalk is from cheese.

As for Aristotle, he no doubt parodied and criticised his master's ideal *Republic*, but what he gave in its place was even far removed from that of Valluvar. For Aristotle slavery was essential. Inequality was natural; inferiority congenital; democracy only for the Greek born. Unlike Valluvar who wrote predominantly for the common man, Aristotle wrote for a leisure class, which held work and business pursuits in contempt. Nor is there an integration of ethics and economics in Aristotle as has been achieved by Thiruvalluvar.

Attempts have, however, been made to draw a parallel between the economic ideas of Valluvar and those of Kautilya. Some hold that the

Kural borrowed some of its economic doctrines from the *Arthasastra*. Others again, like late Prof. Ramachandra Dikshitar held that since Kautilya was a South Indian who went to the Mauryan Court, he carried with him some of Valluvar's economic ideas and embodied them in the *Arthasastra*. On this controversy I have written elsewhere in this book in greater detail.

Perhaps the man whose economic ideas are nearest to Valluvar is Adam Smith in fundamentals, though not in details. In the Middle Ages the feudalistic society of England and the Continent was held in the frame of a rigid class structure. Adam Smith helped unshackle the individual from the bonds of petrifying economic traditions, unleash the spirit of individual enterprise, and thus prepared the way for the epoch of Industrial Revolution. In his own way Valluvar, by postulating the democratic basis of society, and the economic freedom of man to follow the pursuit that suited his aptitude best irrespective of caste or class laid the foundations of a new life for the Tamils. With Smith as with Valluvar human beings were created alike by birth, differences being mainly due to differences in training and differences in environment. For both, Political Economy is a collection of recipes for the statesman, aiming at 'enriching of both the people and the Sovereign' (Introduction to *The Wealth of Nations*.) Above all both arrived

at economics through the difficult path of ethics. Francis Hutcheson, the teacher of Adam Smith, was Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow and so was Adam Smith. Before writing his monumental work, *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith had written a treatise on *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, not so well known as the classic on economics. But it is in this work that Smith's philosophy of riches and of economic activity, and the ethical ideas in relation to them can be found. Smith made his ethical foundations sure in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* before he raised his economic superstructure in the *Wealth of Nations*. Valluvar too postulated his ideas on Ethics in '*Arathuppal*' before he went on to write his '*Porutpal*'.

All this may look strange, for measured in the temporal scale, Valluvar and Smith stand removed by about 15 or 20 centuries and yet the ideas of the dignity of man, the economic freedom of the individual, the concept of a dynamic society and the essential qualities needed of the individuals constituting such a society—were all ideas that were hotly canvassed by both. The greatness of Valluvar is that he has done it twenty centuries earlier.

What was the secret of this primal originality of Valluvar's thoughts? Earlier in this work I characterised the work of Valluvar as a great synthesis—a harmonious blending of the ethical

and the economical. Two major influences were at work in this process. The stream of economic ideas was that of the Tamils of the Sangam - Age, indigenous. The stream of ethical ideas was from the protestant religions of Buddhism and Jainism—then foreign to Tamil land. The insistence on the importance of economic activity, the glorification of effort, enterprise, and what Lord Keynes in modern times called the 'animal spirit', the sanctity of love and war as the norms of life—all came from the virile life of the Tamils of the Sangam Age. The egalitarian ideas, the democratic concept of a society, that man to man is equal, that everyone is free to pursue the avocation that suits him best, that ethics should inform all his activity, the divinity that hedgeth the spirit of sacrifice, the moral responsibility of the individual to society—these received emphasis from the invading religions of the north. In Valluvar's alchemic poetry these two streams commingled into one, for ever obliterating the traces of dichotomy that is posed between ethics and economics. The resulting amalgam became a third product, distinct from the two, all original in its own, a supreme achievement in the art of syncretic creation. Was it symbolic of these twin influences that his poetry was couched in couplets? What a fantasy!

It is important to realise the converging influences of these two streams of thought, not only for

a true understanding of Valluvar's ideas, but also to appreciate the originality of the creative genius, and the grand purpose his work was to serve. Valluvar was standing at the watershed of two great epochs in the history of the Tamils—the golden past of the Sangam Age and the glorious future of the Pallava and Chola expansion. In between the twilight had descended on the life of the Tamils. The excessive materialism and earthly achievements of the Sangam Age had resulted in a hangover, as it were, and the Tamils welcomed the new spiritual awakening as a life-saving antidote. But within two or three centuries of this, the Tamils had become soft. Valluvar saw the need to redress the balance, and so forged his path of golden mean. The momentum that his great work gave sustained them for another thousand years until the closing days of the medieval Chola Power. Then once again, the Tamils were enveloped in other-worldly ideas that came from a different stream, lost their zeal and vigour for material achievements, their social system got ossified, and so they went into a deep slumber for another spell of thousand years. All these thousand years, Valluvar's teachings indeed remained alive, only to support and authenticate the purely other-worldly direction of Tamilian life. Their equally potent influence for good in the material sphere of life went under. The balancing force of the *Kural* was lost sight of. Small wonder, therefore, that the Tamils, once

again on the threshold of a great renaissance have now gone back to Valluvar for inspiration and revival of their native vigour, lost in the mazes of ten centuries of other-worldly pre-occupation.

In the course of an attempt at an evaluation of Aristotles' Ethics, Bertrand Russels says that there are three questions we can ask about ethics or that of any philosophy; (1) Is it internally self-consistent? (2) Is it consistent with the remainder of the author's views? (3) Does it give answers to ethical problems that are consonant to our own ethical feelings? He then adds, "If the answer to either the first or the second question is in the negative, the philosopher in question has been guilty of some intellectual error. But if the answer to the third question is in the negative, we have no right to say that he is mistaken. We have only the right to say that we do not like him."

It is now for the student of *Thirukkural* to say whether Thiruvalluvar had made any intellectual slip and whether he likes the philosopher or not.

"Go behind the veil of whatever things you may come across in life and track the spirit of truth to its subtlest retreats. Therein lies wisdom."
—Valluvar.

PART TWO

RELEVANCE OF VALLUVAM TO MODERN POLITICAL ECONOMY

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1. Science of Human action

1. Valluvam postulates its economic ideas in an overall framework of Social Ethics. These ideas do not belong to a "neutral" science of economics. They are informed by value judgements.

2. Valluvam belongs to the realm of Praxeology. Economics in Thiruvalluvar's system of thought is a branch of Science of Human Action. It is not divorced from Politics. It is Political Economy *per se*.

3. Thiruvalluvar was an "innovator" in the world of Economic Thought. How far such innovation was a reaction to contemporary economic

thought and practice or how far was it an attempt at "theorising"—that is to lay down a body of abiding general principles to serve as guide to universal economic action—is difficult to determine. There is too little knowledge of the political, social and economic conditions of Thiruvalluvar's times to answer this with certainty.

4. There is an underlying vein of perennality, universality and robust dynamism in Thiruvalluvar's ideas on the basic motivations of economic progress. These ideas are refreshingly original and surprisingly modern in the context of current Growth Theories.

5. The non-economic ideas of Thiruvalluvar should be linked to his economic ideas and together they should be understood as integral parts of a Total Theory of Social Change.

6. For Thiruvalluvar, society is an integral arrangement in which the good of the individual harmonises with that of the community. Personal ethics is not to be in conflict with Social ethics. This, however, is not the same thing as in ADAM SMITH who relies on the Invisible Hand to see that the interest of the State is the sum total of the self-interest of the individuals.

7. Rationality is a pervasive feature of Thiruvalluvar's philosophy. Rational conduct consists in approximating the good of the individual to that of society. The reader is repeatedly exhorted to employ his "grey cell" in this process.

8. The material values of life receive unprecedented emphasis in Thirukkural assigning the spiritualistic values to the specialised renunciates. Thiruvalluvar strikes a golden mean by indicating to the rest a way of active economic functioning in a milieu of Social Ethics. There is an evident attempt to restore to their proper place the economic values that have been snowed under predominantly other-worldly out-look on life.

9. Valluvam views poverty with horror. MARSHALL'S famous dictum in the opening paragraphs of his *PRINCIPLES* that "poverty is the degradation of the poor", sounds like an echo from the two-millenia old Book of Kural.

10. Poverty is not divinely ordained. It is man-made. "If any one says poverty is God-made, let that God who made it Himself turn a beggar and taste its bitter pills", so declaims Thiruvalluvar, the Immortal Bard of Rationality, in bitter resentment of iniquitous social arrangements.

2. Natural Resources

11. In Thiruvalluvar's system of economic values agriculture holds the central place. In fact, the importance given to agriculture is almost Physiocratic. The agriculturist is considered

the lynchpin of society and men of other pursuits are but followers in his camp. May be this is a reaction to the then prevalent economic thinking, which had assigned to agriculture a low place in the Social Order even as the Physiocrat thinking was a reaction to the excessive importance given to Mercantilism. That apart, Thiruvalluvar essays to emphasise the perennial nature of an economic truth, only too frequently forgotten by humanity in times of harvest abundance and too poignantly remembered when drought and famine plague the land. Thiruvalluvar views the economic system not in terms of the fashionable measuring rod of exchange value prevalent today, but from the angle of real values. The economic thoughts of Thiruvalluvar are seminal in character and belong to an "Economics of Permanence" that has Welfare rather than Wealth as its content and goal.

12. Thiruvalluvar lays great emphasis on improved agricultural techniques, as known in those days, and lays down a scale of priorities in the use of various inputs. Was he not laying the foundations of a Green Revolution, which it took his indifferent followers two thousand years to rediscover?

13. Valluvam extols rain next to God, and it refers to the two waters—surface and subterranean—as the natural resources of an ideal economy. Presumably much of the agricultural

economy in Thiruvalluvar's days was dry farming and rain-fed cropping. The agricultural practices he refers to also belong to dry-farming. Large irrigation works were evidently limited in number and spread in his days.

3. Human Resources

14. Although Thiruvalluvar mentions land, capital and human resources as the basic factors of production, he gives great importance to Human Resources. Natural resources and Capital will not be wanting if human resources are there, Thiruvalluvar says. "When good Mother Earth sees those who plead poverty and remain idle, she will laugh at them." He is obviously advocating intensive farming.

15. From this follows a condemnation of absentee landlordism. "If a farmer will stay without visiting his fields, the field will go into sulks like his wife."

16. Valluvam condemns begging in unequivocal terms. "There is nothing sweeter to eat than what one ekes out by sweat of his brow-be it only limpid watery gruel."—Human dignity is all.

17. Valluvam acclaims Human Endeavour as the main spring of economic progress. "Sloth

of the individual is a menace to the collective prosperity of the Society."

18. Behind all human endeavour is the determination for, what the moderns say, the "non-achievement". "Goddess of Wealth will enquire the way and go to him who has unwavering zeal." Troubles, according to Valluvam, should be considered only as a creation of the mind.

19. All poverty is the result of lack of untiring endeavour. Perseverance, zeal, dauntless courage in the face of calamities and an "animal spirit" that knows of no sloth—these can make even "black Fate retreat." By steadfastness of purpose, planners achieve what they had planned.

20. All men are born equal, Valluvam proclaims. It says, birth does not confer status, but work does. In his time, the farmer was a low-born; therefore, farming was an inferior occupation. Valluvam derides this philosophy. By declaring farming as the noblest of professions, he confers on the farmer the right to high respect in Society. Valluvam reverses the scale of economic values; it confers dignity on labour, unknown to the society of his days.

21. Thiruvalluvar sets great store by specialised knowledge. "Expert opinion should serve as an unfailing guide to human action," Valluvam

says and adds, "let him, therefore, who has undertaken a project obtain the opinion of those who know its intricacies."

4. The State in Relation to Economic Progress

22. The State is a positive force actively concerned with production, maintenance and distribution of wealth. It is not the grand "policeman" of *laissez faire* school.

23. The family is the nucleus and motor force of economic striving. In the uplift of the family, leadership finds its fulfilment, and collective good its achievement.

24. Political security depends on economic security. Therefore, it is incumbent on the State to augment its economic resources by all fair means.

25. The "sources of revenue" according to Valluvam are three—escheats, customs, and tributes from vassal states. There is no mention of land revenue in Valluvam—a source of State revenue accepted by all writers on ancient Indian polity. This departure of Thiruvalluvar requires to be pondered over. It becomes

intelligible, however, in the context of his revolutionary emphasis on agriculture, which, despite being basic, had a raw deal in his days.

5. Non-Economic Factors in Economic Development

26. Great stress is laid on education as condition of economic growth, "Learning is the most valuable and imperishable wealth; other things are not." This should be related to the stress laid on the development of Human Resources in Valluvam.

27. Where universal literacy is not possible, Valluvam pleads for audio-education. "Wealth of wealth is the wisdom wealth, since that wealth tops all other wealth", declares Valluvam.

28. Valluvam points out the importance of Public Health. It wants that a country should be free from epidemics and much of health care should be through preventive medicine. Public Health, Valluvam considers, depends on the active life of the citizens and their correct habits of eating and exercising.

29. Valluvam holds that gambling, drinking and promiscuous sex life do not contribute to

society's economic progress. "Disassembling
dames, drinks and dice are the friends of those
abandoned by the goddess of wealth"—is the
warning of Valluvam.

30. Hoarding is anti-social. Tiruvalluvar
characterises it as "demoniac". Hoarded
wealth is "like a tree bearing poisonous fruit
in the centre of a populous settlement". It
helps none and spells destruction all around.

PART THREE

THIRUKKURAL AND ARTHASASTRA

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Thirukkural is a book on righteous conduct;. It sets the rules of the game for a wholesome life here below; it is not an utopia.

Thiruvalluvar's thoughts transcend time and space. It therefore behoves the people of different times and climes to draw on its lessons in the context of their own milieu. Furthermore being the acme of pithiness, the couplets, for their clear understanding, have to be paraphased adequately and in keeping with the order of the day. A thesis on human conduct, the Kural is never divorced from reality.

Scholars name three factors as responsible for social evolution, development and consolidation. It is religion, contend, the Historians like Toynbee. wealth postulate the Economists. Love, say the Poets, and Freudians. Valluvar on his part, unlike in the fable of the elephant and the blind men, draws a complete picture by apportioning due places to all the three factors. He does not, however, do so on historical grounds. Far from it, he seeks to tell how these factors should be observed in the living present.

Ethics is religion, so holds Valluvar. Never does he separate the two. 'Arathupal' of the Kural points out to Valluvar's conviction that religion divested of ethics is a ritualistic mumbo-jumbo.

Valluvar does not separate economics and politics either. Good economics for him is good politics. And it is the first and foremost aim of politics to realise the goal of such an economics. Which is why he calls it 'Porutpal' or Economics and not 'Arasupal' or Polity.

In like manner, he does not differentiate between love and chastity. What is chastity but true love? So he calls this division as 'Kamathupal' or 'On Love' and not 'Karppupal' or 'On Chastity'.

This therefore is the reason for the three major divisions being entitled Ethics, Economics and Love instead of Religion, Polity, and Chastity.

Religion per se may relegate ethics to the background; hypocrisy and superstition may rule the roost at the cost, of ethics. It is for fear of this that Valluvar emphasise 'Aram' or Ethics in his opening chapter. For fear again that 'Polity' may diverge towards naked power and authoritarianism at the cost of individual freedom and broad-based economic welfare, does he lay stress on 'Porul' or Economics in the second division. He extols 'Kamam' or Love in the third and final substantive division, lest the rigours of undue emphasis on cold chastity should hinder the kindling of the tender flames of spontaneous love, so essential for social progress. Thus Valluvar holds, ethics is the life-breath of religion; economics is the life-blood of polity and love the seed of chastity.

Valluvar places his disquisition on wealth or Economics in between Ethics and Love. The reason, the traditional view holds, is that only through wealth can ethics and love be attained in real life. But is there not a even more plausible explanation for this arrangement?

Assume life as a balance with ethics for one pan, and love for the other. Wealth then is the weight which keeps the scale in balance. If the pan of ethics goes down love is endangered. If the pan of love slides down the ethical values weigh less. Therefore is it necessary that the wealth is so distributed as to keep ethics and

love in balance. Only such a position can lead to a life without ups and downs; an orderly life leading to a blissful poise. This seems to be the message behind the arrangement of the three divisions in Tirukkural.

If it is impossible for mortals, however, wise they be, to look beyond their time and environs. How then is Valluvar an exception? What was his times like? What scholarly works did he imbibe? What imprest did those books leave on this thinking? What was the socio cultural milieu of his time? And beliefs? What were the economic thoughts current in Valluvar's time? Is there similarity between those thoughts and Valluvar's 'Porutpal?' Did Valluvar study them? These questions are inescapable before training the enquiry on the economics of Valluvar.

There is evidence that exclusive books on economics or on the art of acquiring wealth did exist in ancient days, Saint Ma Thava Sivagnana Munivar in his Sivagnana Padiyam cites in the first chapter of that Saiva work that Artha Nool as was one of the eighteen arts mentioned in Vayu Samhita. It is referred to as one among the four Upavedas. 'Artha Nool' is further defined as the 'art of acquiring wealth enough for here and hereafter.' There is also mention of an exclusive work on 'Porulpuri Nool' in the classical Tamil epic Jivaka Chintamani.

However, these ancient books on economics dealt more with the polity than with the

economics of their times. Economic concepts as now understood were neither formulated nor elucidated. For instance, how did concepts like interest, income, profit and wage emerge? What is their basis? Is there a relation between them and production? And between production and distribution? Questions such as these, so relevant today, were not asked in those ancient treatises. Exports and imports and their role in economic development were not probed into. Trade cycles were not analysed. Discussions on unemployment, under employment, inflation and recession—these were conspicuous by their absence. Nor were measures suggested to mitigate or end them.

This however need not surprise us. For, economics as a separate discipline emerged only in recent times. It was only in 1776, that Adam Smith the Father of Economics, wrote his 'Wealth of Nations'. Until then economics was discussed as part of politics or philosophy. In the Mercantilist era, when the economy was run under governmental patronage, economics formed part of politics. Which is why Adam Smith called it Political Economy. Later Smith enunciated the laissez faire doctrine according to which the government is not to interfere in the economic pursuits of the individual; and that such an arrangement will best ensure human well-being. Government should limit itself to functions of providing security to the citizens. Only after this did economics part company with

politics and came into its own. Its nomenclature too changed from Political Economy to the separate science of Economics.

In time, however, this concept turned the full circle. Economic activities seldom stirred in a big way without political interference. It was in this context that Lord Keynes pleaded for the restoration of the traditional notion of political economy over the later day concept of the pure science of economics. Without politics there is no economics; economics cannot survive in isolation from politics.

The ancient books on economics were compendiously referred to as Artha Nool in Tamil. 'Artha Nool' spoke mainly of Polity; economic problems were not as dominant and complicated as today. It does not, however, mean the basic issues with which economics is concerned did not exist. Only the social beliefs of that time stood in the way of any inquiry into the basic issues of economics. The belief that poverty and economic inequalities were the inevitable consequences of the commissions and omissions in the earlier life or lives, was deeply rooted. Trade and commerce had not penetrated the farthest corners of even the then known globe. Therefore the present day problems of international trade did not exist. Monetary usage was limited; and savings and investment did not pose the massive problem they are today. Those were days when life ran

a smooth course for the majority of the people undisturbed by the rough tides of economic urge.

Among the early works on political economy Kautilya's Arthasastra is an outstanding classic. Kautilya is believed to have been a Brahmin who migrated to the North from the South. The story has it that he made his way into the court of Chandra Gupta Maurya by masterminding the downfall of the king's arch enemy, the Nanda emperor, and thereupon was promoted as minister. Arthasastra is believed to have been written about this time. As the period of Chandra Gupta Maurya is accepted to be 4th century B. C., Arthasastra too is dated about that time.

There are said to be striking parallels between Valluvar's 'Porutpal' or Economics and the thoughts expressed in Arthasastra. On this strength, it is believed Valluvar must have lived only after the 4th Century B. C.

In resolving this question of alleged parallelism in thought between the two authors, three points have to be clarified first. (1) Whether there had been no books on economics before the time of Kautilya (2) Whether 4th century B.C. was indeed Kautilya's time and (3) Whether Valluvar could have been inclined to accept Kautilya's thoughts unreservedly.

That Kautilya pays glowing tributes to Sukra and Brahaspathi in the very first chapter of his work,

Arthasastra, points to the possibility that both of them might have been authors on political economy prior to him. Kautilya himself concedes that his book draws on the earlier works on the subject. In the 8th Chapter of Book I dealing with the attributes of a minister, he makes critical references to seven of his predecessors—Bharadvaja, Visalaksha, Parasara, Pisuna, Kaunapadanta, Vatavyathi and the Son of Bahudanti. All these seven masters ought to have been writers on political economy. Besides he frequently amends, amplifies and contradicts the views of his "teacher" to establish his own doctrines. It is therefore evident that there had been a number of books on political economy before the time of Kautilya.

The date of Arthasastra is till a moot point. Both Dr. Shyama Sastri who translated the book first in to English and Dr. J. F. Fleet who wrote the introduction to it, place the book in Chandragupta Maurya's time i. e., 4th century B. C. Some of the later historians like Dr. Jacoby, Dr. Jayaswal Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee, Dr. N. N. Law, Dr. H. C. Ray and Dr. Vincent Smith were also of the same view. Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, however, held that Arthasastra belonged to the 1st century B.C., while Jolly and Schmidt in their publication of the book, as also Winternitz who did independent research on it, put the date as 3rd Century B. C.

In the second volume of "the Age of Imperial Unity", dealing with ancient Indian history, brought out by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan under the patronage and with an introduction by Late K. M. Munshi, though Kautilya's period has not been precisely arrived at, it is put at a few centuries after the Maurya period on the strength of the following six facts:

1. None of the writers who claim Kautilya's period as 4th century B. C. can be said to have conclusively established that he lived before 3rd century A. D.
2. Sanskrit is mentioned as the official language in Arthasastra. But Prakrit was the official language during the Maurya time. Kautilya says there were 63 letters in the alphabet, but there were only 43 letters during the Mauryan period.
3. According to Kautilya the fort of Mauryas was made of bricks. But from accounts of contemporary Greek travellers to the Mauryan kingdom like Arian, Megasthenese and Strabo, it is gathered that the fort of Chandra Gupta Maurya was made of wood.
4. The metals mentioned in Arthasastra do not belong to the period of Mauryas.
5. The terms used by Kautilya for civil servants are not found in the stone edicts of the Mauryan period, but of later periods only.

6. The boundaries as mentioned by Kautilya refer to the kingdom of Bhara Samudram. Bhara Samudram is the ancient name for the island of Tamiraparni as gathered from the Greek work of 'Peripluce' written in the 1st century A. D. And Mauryas had not known Tamiraparni. China and Cambodia have been mentioned in Arthasastra which the Mauryas were not aware of. There is no evidence of relations between India and China before the Han dynasty which ruled China between 206 B. C. and 20 A. D. Also the mention of kingdoms like Nepal point to Kautilya's time as later to the Mauryan period. Again according to Barriedale Keith, Arthasastra may be dated around 4th Century A. D., and not to the period of Chandragupta Maurya.

If it is granted that Valluvar borrowed from Arthasastra for his ideas in 'Porutpal' and that Arthasastra's date was 450 A. D., then the Kural must have been written only after the 4th century A. D. However only one writer puts forward this view. He believes the Kural was written Circa 450 A. D. It must be borne in mind that granting Arthasastra period to be 4th century A. D., 50 years would not have sufficed to translate it into Tamil, considering how slow-moving ideas and books were in those days. On this count then Valluvar's time has to be dated still later, say about the 6th century A. D. Those who hold this view mainly go by the evidence of parallel echoes of thoughts

and expressions in the two works. But the Kural's thoughts and words are extensively seen in the literature of the Sangam period like the Purananuru and epic poems like Silapatikaram and Manimekalai. To suggest that Valluvar himself could have adopted the style and language of the above mentioned works is totally against literary tradition. On the contrary, it will be more fitting to presume that the Kural's style of masterly brevity combined with deep perceptivity was eagerly adopted by these poets. Therefore it is safe to hazard the guess that the Kural must have been written before the above mentioned works, say some where between 1st century B. C. and 1st century A. D.

From the account of Prof. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar of Madras University it is learnt that Alala Singer said to have been a close associate of Valluvar and who went to Sri Lanka from the Chola kingdom and spread the glories of the Tamil language there, lived in the 1st century B. C. If Valluvar's time is to be placed in keeping with this tradition. it is evident that the date of the Kural can hardly be later than that of Arthasastra.

Arthasastra is sometimes compared to Machiavelli's political treatise, 'The Prince'. Barriedale Keith, on the contrary, brings out clearly the contradictions between the two and establishes the incomparable superiority of Machiavelli's

thoughts. If this is so, how can one compare Kautilya with Valluvar for whom rightenousness was the life-breath of thought, word and deed. Between the two, the similarities are but a few, but contrasts many. On fundamentals, there is little agreement between ideas in Arthasastra and in 'Porutpal' of the Kural, whatsoever.

Tiruvalluvar glorifies farming as the basis of wealth getting. He allots a separate chapter to it. He praises it as the noblest of avocations; and to those who pursue it all others should bow in reverence. He extols the farmer as the axle-pin of the revolving world.

In Arthasastra, on the contrary, ways and means are spelt out to cheat and coerce the farmers into paying taxes. Kautilya proposes six levies on the farmers (1) a share of the produce (2) a surcharge in addition to the share mentioned first (3) a tax on the farmer's belongings (4) a tax on the use of pastures (5) a tax for measuring the land (6) and a tax for providing him security. Kautilya was not alone in belittling agriculture. In his time toil and misery were the privileges of the lower orders in the society, while profit and prosperity were the preserves of the upper castes. Writers of Arthasastra from whom Kautilya learnt his lessons had also held the same tradition. Brahaspati ranks farming a little above gambling and cheating. Manu considers

farming as scornful as vending of cattle and carts.

Arthasastra is based on a system of castes. It had its own codes of ethics, economics and marital relations. The foundations of its polity has no relation to ethics, economics and love in the way the Kural conceived of them as of one genre based on righteousness. The Kural condemns the practice of caste system, and proclaims like Rosseaue, but long long before him, "All men are born equal". It exposes the supercilious belief that 'wealth is all'—a belief which obscures the role of ethics so essential for harmonious and humane social functioning and development.

Thus Valluvar's value system in the field of economics is in many ways different from that of Kautilya.

One sixth of the produce, according to Valluvar is the ideal rate of taxation. That too it should be paid voluntarily and willingly. He condemns in no uncertain terms any harshness and coercion in the collection of taxes. He says a tyrant exacting an excessive share as taxes at the point of the sceptre is no better than a highway robber brandishing his spear.

The devices laid down for the king for collection taxes in Arthasastra are as much shocking

as ridiculous. The King's spies under disguise of they are traders are to deceive the real traders by striking a partnership first, and later decamping with the proceeds of gold and silver; nor are to they hesitate to burgle the house of those traders who refused. Some tax officials were trained to collect money from gullible public, by frightening them in the name of devils and horror deities, while others are to capitalise on the superstitious belief of the people, by raising bogies of snakes and ghosts in trees and temples. Nor is the king to flinch from framing the rich on trumped up charges and mulct them of their wealth. Spies in the garb of holy men are to exploit the gullible people on the promise of wealth and women. Not even open prostitution was to be frowned upon to fill the coffers of the king.

Is it just to compare the Kural with Arthasastra which does not hesitate even the use of harlots who are condemned by Valluvar as creatures bereft of grace, for revenue gathering?

Valluvar condemns drink as the killer of body and mind. But Arthasastra sanctions its distillation, besides providing for a separate government overseer to distribute it in courts, cities and villages. Also are described by him in detail the enchanting drinking salons of haunting aroma, cosy divans, luxurious beds, and floral decorations, where people could enjoy wine in the company of women.

How then compare the two on the basis of a few superficial similarities? The contradictions between the two are indeed fundamental and deep rooted.

The 'Porutpal' of the Kural can thus in no way be classified in the same genre of thought as of Arthasastra. Great works of lieterature in spite of their profound thoughts, imagination and learned authorship have necessarily to be in keeping with the cultural realities of their times by and large. The Kural can therefore be held to mirror the spirit and style of the Tamil life and culture of its time.

There is absolutely no room for the conjecture that Valluvar might have borrowed from the economic thoughts of earlier non-Tamil works. Because, like Arthasastra, they were founded on the discriminating caste system; which was hardly in tune with Valluvar's general social philosophy. Generally they all decried farming and manual labour; labour was subjected to various socio-religious rigours. Full justice was denied to workers with dirty hands. Farming was denigrated as a calling befitting the lower orders in society.

The life pictured in these works was one of survival the fittest and exploitation of the weak by the strong. Such a life was an anathema to the Tamil Culture of that time, which gave the pride of place to dignity of labour.

Not only the non-Tamil works of India, but even the great ancient Greek thoughts do not stand in comparison with the economic thoughts of Kural. Aristotle wrote separately on Polity and Ethics, as his society was divided into Greeks and slaves. He derided physical labour and reserved farming for the slaves. He did not dwell on charity or compassion. The culture of his people tolerated living exploitation of others, labour. The ideal of equality can be attained only where there is no tolerance of exploitation. Perhaps the unique thoughts of Valluvar sprang from such an ideal state of affairs in life of the Tamils in his time.

Coming to modern times, the economist Valluvar stands as a colossus. Most economists today barringmen like Boulding, assign economics a place of neutrality. Not to be value-loaded. Economic works of today are merely technical manuals or tool books. They seem to be concerned just with drawing up workable models for exotic ideologies like capitalism, socialism or a mixture of both. As books in technical literature, they have no place for ethics. "Give us the ideology, we will give the framework" seems to be their credo. No wonder economists are unable to play an effective role in the fashioning of society towards a just and equitable New Order.

It does no credit to a discipline to be without an aim of its own. Valluvar points it out in the

beginning itself when he asks: What use is learning by itself? One may also recall here the thoughts of Gandhiji. Who said economics not founded on righteousness will be a farce. Ethics and economics reinforce one another. Economics if it aids only the exploitation of the weak is a veritable 'Dismal Science.' True economics paves the way for social justice. It ensures the balanced development of all sections and upholds the dignity of labour.

It would do as well to bear in mind the above thoughts of Valluvar and Gandhiji. With ethical basis economics becomes an ennobling discipline. Economics should go hand in hand with Ethics. Only then can a desirable mix of ideology with technicalities be obtained.

'Aram' or Ethics is the masterful idea in 'Porutpal'; and the ideology it breaths, in the words of Kural is this:

If begging is the lot allotted to you by the Creator, Let that Creator himself beg and wander about in distress.

PART FOUR

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THIRUVALLUVAR

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1. Setting

A good number of learned minds have gone into the classic work of Thiruvalluvar—some with clinical precision—over the last thousand years and more. The entire range of 1330 couplets have been squeezed and squeezed to extract the essence of the teachings of the Master Poet. A great deal of research has also been undertaken by way of critiques—on its originality, the probable influences of the then extant local and foreign works on the Master, its internal consistency, and external parallelism to its coevals, the permanence of its relevance and so on. I shall not attempt to turn any new

stones. What follows is a review of the home and foreign policies of the Kural suggested by random thoughts that arose on the state of mind of the poet, so essential to understand his views in the proper perspective.

Ordinarily, it is odd to review a work some 2000 years old. However when it comes to Kural, it seems to be the most natural and purposeful thing to do. It is a work about mankind as such and through time and not about a certain sect or a tribe or race at a certain time or period. The theme of Kural is not something abstract and other worldly, pertaining to the realm of mysticism. Kural has a down-to-earth theme—living here below, and now. The book lays down a code of living for the individual in his relation to the society. In this Valluvar is unique. He is an Idealist-Pragmatist. He circumscribed his ideals into human reality. He did not invent any out-of-the-way code of living. Neither did he prescribe any extraordinary sacrifices for the people. His code is perfectly in line with the "ordinary business of life". Thus he may not have laid down the right code of living; but he has most certainly laid down the best code of living. Two millenia have passed since Valluvar's time. Yet the foibles, faults, follies and fallacies of the human race that Valluvar high-lighted are still with us, as green as ever. Hence is the lasting relevance

and influence of Kural which can still pave the way for a meaning-ful society.

That the Kural is basically temporal and mundane in content should not be confused with agnosticism or atheism. The fact that Valluvar opens his account with an invocation to God Almighty; that he allots a separate chapter to Ascetic Virtues and his deterministic view of Destiny should suffice to convince us that he was an ardent theist. But what distinguishes him from all other sages of his time and after is his practical outlook of life on earth. Have faith in God, but wait for the green light before crossing the street,—is the kind of advice typical of him. Valluvar sees no inconsistency in being godly and human at the same time. "Indeed there is hardly any need for asceticism if the heart is pure and shuns what all world condemns as wrong."¹ For Valluvar there is no dichotomy involved between materialism and spirituality. One may call this synthesis as his thesis.

The Sangam Age, considered to be the Golden Age of the Tamils, in which Valluvar lived was subjected to two main counter-acting influences. Originally the Sangam period marked the high-tide of Tamil materialism. People were mainly concerned with the pursuit of material achievements of life. Love and war formed the main themes of the poets. No heavenly doubts troubled their carefree hearts, such as did the

contemporary Upanishad thinkers in the North. The Tamils of the Sangam Age were realists by and large. With the advent of alien faiths from without such as Buddhism and later Jainism, and from within, particularly the Vedic influence, the outlook of the people began to change and the slumber of thought was stirred again. What was welcomed, more by the rulers than the subjects as a wholesome correction to the excessively earth earthy concerns of the age, soon drifted to the extremes tilting the balance to the point of being counter-productive. Suddenly love became an object of disgust and war an act of dispisal. Material pursuits and physical valour became an anathema. Such was the effect of self-abnegation preached by these alien religions that freed from a predominantly rationalistic attitude, the life of the Tamils passed into systematic disparagement of the world as total illusion.

Thiruvalluvar, a dialetic thinker he was, presumably sensed the danger in the situtaion and took upon himself the task of striking the balance between these two extremes of the Material and Spiritual. Evidently he rejected the reversion to unalloyed materialism. Moreover the new gospels had much to teach that was of lasting value and had already taken root in the hearts and minds of men, Thus he sought the obvious—the golden mean. He brought forth a matchless work of syncretism between the two apparently

opposing concepts of the Spiritual and Material. Finally, the message has to reach the people at large. It had to be democratic in form, content and appeal. The form had to be new, even as its content of thought. The choice of the form of Kural was deliberate, despite its great limitations as a vehicle of didactic teaching. It did not have the imaginative appeal either of Buddhist Jataka tales or Upanishad stories, or of biblical parables, not to say of the later day absorbing epics and Puranas. The success he made of the epigrammatic form is a miracle in the history of poetical expression.

Though Thiruvalluvar was decidedly a theist, and believed in the attendant other-than-worldly implications, in Kural he primarily sought to present only a Model of Living. Of the four-fold conventional divisions of life's aim into Dharma or Aram (Ethics) Artha or Porul (Polity) Kama or Inbam (Love) and Moksha or Veedu (Liberation) Valluvar deliberately excludes the fourth objective and confines himself to the first three. He thus sought to present only the earthly framework of a society—namely ethics, polity and love.

In Valluvar's system the three pillars—ethics, polity and love—form an integrated structure. One does not run counter to the other. To understand any aspect of Kural one must necessarily understand and accept his code of ethics or

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Aram. For, it is a single current that pervades the entire poem. He sees polity only through the ethical eye. Valluvar gives it (ethics) the pride of place in the introduction (Payiram) itself. Ethics of Valluvar is not something demonstrable as, for instance, in the case of the Utilitarian Philosophy. There is no likening of pleasures arising from push pin and poetry. It is founded on the innate, intuitive and abiding human values. In the final analysis it is somewhat like the Confucian dictum of "do good because it is good."

Valluvar's Aram or ethics is not concerned with the social laws, the society's customs and conventions, nor with the Governmental laws which determine the relationship of man to man in the context of society as a political organism. Valluvar is only concerned with a moral code of permanent and universal validity. The authority of this law spills into the "other-world" too. For, the observance of this Law or Righteousness "opens the gates of heaven and unlocks the treasures of the earth."²

It is a common and understandable temptation to compare and contrast Tiruvalluvar's views with those of his contemporary and later-day philosophers. His political thoughts have been both extensively and intensively compared with those of political philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Confucius, Machiavelli and our

own Kautilya. The near-identical views of Valluvar and Kautilya in certain matters of polity have particularly attracted much debate. Who was influenced by whom is still an inconclusive debate, as the respective periods of the two authors are not yet clearly known. I have already dealt with this in an earlier chapter.

In fact it is immaterial to ponder over who all influenced Valluvar in his ideas. Philosophy is essentially a value-loaded discipline. And value-judgement is purely intuitive. What becomes a philosophy is when what is uttered by way of values by the philosopher is in perfect harmony with the intuitive values common to all mankind. When the values of two philosophers are identical, it is not necessary that either of them should have been influenced by the other. Religions have grown not because of their apostles, but because of the intuitive capacity of mankind to understand and accept the values contained in them.

Thiruvalluvar, so erudite, evidently must have been conversant with the political thoughts of his times. But Kural that he composed was essentially an original piece; a product of his intuitive search for the right values of earthly life. Whatever be one's erudition, it is one's intuitive knowledge that finally asserts.³ And that knowledge was highly eclectic in its approach.

Kural is not a manual of statecraft dealing with the machinery of Government like kautilya's. Arthasastra or Machiavelli's Prince. Statecraft is a concept changing with time and forms of Government. Kural is concerned only with the abiding values that should inform any form of polity at any time, anywhere. Thus though Valluvar's polity is monarchy, which was the popular form of Government in his times, the values attributed to it hold good for any form of Government upto the present day democracy, or perhaps any other innovation political philosophers may in future think of. It was not the intention of Valluvar to perpetuate monarchy. He was beyond the passion of his day. His search was to find a lasting basis which could provide order and progress in any form of society. And he found it in ethics or Aram. Based on ethics he propounded his polity.

Valluvar's monarchy is not autarchy. The king in the Kural is not the despot of Machiavelli or the Universal Sovereign or Chakravartin of Kautilya. He is a just king—an enlightened and benevolent monarch. "The armour of the king is his equity."⁴ What brings glory to the king is not his javelin, but his sceptre held with equity.⁵ Conversely, Valluvar attacks tyranny in no uncertain terms. A tyrant is worse than an assassin;⁶ or highway robber.⁷ The ruin of such a ruler will be swift and sure.⁸

Valluvar does not speak of civil war or revolution that will topple a tyrant. He believes in natural justice. In a tyrant's land seasons become vagarious and heavens withhold their bounty.⁹ It is the tears of the oppressed and the down-trodden who groan under the tyrannous yoke of a prince that wear away his fortune.¹⁰ And "the days of a tyrant, on whose head fall the curses of his subjects, are numbered and he perishes".¹¹

The internal state policies of Valluvar can be brought under the conventional classification of the legislative, executive and the judiciary. However, Valluvar, as noted earlier, is not concerned with the administrative mechanism of these units of state. He merely gives the attributes of the persons who man these departments and their respective functioning. Valluvar's unique contribution is that he holds the ruled as well as the Ruler equally responsible for the just and orderly functioning of the state. He therefore, prescribes the necessary attributes of the functionaries as well as of the people.

The legislative organ of Valluvar consists at the top of the Ruler and his Council of Ministers. Valluvar attaches much importance to the personal attributes of the ruler. For not only does the Ruler wield the ultimate authority; he has to be a model for his subjects. Valluvar does not see any dualism between the personal qualities of a Ruler and his actions,

as did some philosophers in the name of reality. For a Ruler's actions to be great, he must personify greatness himself. History is punctuated with instances where the personality of the Leader has overshadowed all other attributes. A Ruler, Valluvar says, would have unflinching courage, extreme 'liberality', infinite wisdom and inexhaustible energy.¹² He almost resembles the Philosopher-King of Plato. He should avoid niggardliness, overweening pride and sensuality.¹³ Innumerable are the instances of heads of states who were forced to step down for reasons of indiscretion in private life. So a Ruler should avoid liquor and gambling. A king who is a drunkard is not dreaded by his foes.¹⁴ And let a king avoid gambling even if he is skilful in that; for many a monarch who had flourished have come to grief by frequenting the gambling hall and playing dice."¹⁵ The Ruler for all his wisdom and valour should not lock himself in an ivory tower. He should identify himself with his subjects as one among them. He shall be easy of access and never guilty of a harsh word;¹⁶ lest all his greatness should be as useless as the hoarded wealth jealously guarded by a sleepless monster.¹⁷ Eternal vigilance is another important attribute of a Ruler. Nothing is impossible for a Ruler who is all eyes and ears about his work.¹⁸

Fore-thought and planning for a Ruler are essential qualities, be it in economic or political matters.

A country well endowed with natural resources by itself cannot bring about prosperity. It has to be exploited and managed judiciously. A good Ruler is one who develops the resources of his domain, enriches his exchequer and channels the expenditure purposefully.¹⁹ A Ruler who is thoughtless of his expenditure only appears to be prosperous, but in fact he is on a "downward path to destruction".²⁰ The Ruler should combine in him the qualities of an economic adviser in a larger sense and a business consultant in a micro sense. Kural advises the Ruler to "take stock of the expenditure, return, and profit and for any enterprise, and then embark on it."²¹ Incidentally, Valluvar holds the traditional approach to state budget. He recommends a balanced budget.²² Perhaps there is much wisdom in this time honoured canon of State Finance, so much respected until Gladston's days, and so little remembered in modern times with the insoluble problems of deficit financing and recurring bouts of inflation, deflation and stag-flation.

PART FIVE

DOMESTIC POLICY

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1. Council of Ministers

Although Valluvar's Ruler is an enlightened father figure revered instinctively by the people, he (Valluvar) is only too aware of the human limitations, and that power corrupts mortals. Hence his equal emphasis on the council of ministers who act as a positive check on him. "Is there an enemy that can work evil to a wise ruler who turns not away from the wholesome taunts and reproaches of his far-seeing ministers?" asks Valluvar.²³ A Ruler can ignore the ministers only at his own peril. "Ruin seizes the ruler that trusts not his wise counsellors." Even in a democracy, in practice, the head of the state, be it the President or the Prime Minister, is not one among equals, but wields the final authority. Nevertheless for his continuing in

office he has necessarily to consider the counsel of his ministers. A Ruler therefore must take utmost care in the selection of his ministers. The stability of a Ruler rests on the wise counsel of his ministers, even as profit is built on capital.²⁵

2. Choice of Counsellors

Valluvar prescribes an elaborate screening procedure—which is an accepted practice even today—for the selection of the ministers; lest “reposing confidence in a minister without studying him breeds millions of mischiefs even to generation of rulers yet unborn.”²⁶ The minister shall be screened with regard to his lineage, character and honour;²⁷ and also for his “love of right conduct, love of money, love of women and love of life.”²⁸ Valluvar vehemently opposes nepotism—which is a bane even today—in the selection of ministers. It is the height of folly.²⁹

3. Assignment of Portfolios

Once the screening is over, and the choice of the minister is made, then comes the question of choice of portfolio for him. The Ruler shall

be no less careful in assigning the portfolios. "Weigh the merits of a minister," Valluvar exhorts the ruler; "choose him and then assign him his proper sphere of work."³⁰

4. Qualities of Counsellors

The ministers as advisers are the positive check on the functioning of the Ruler. It is therefore necessary that they should also be men of high qualities. Valluvar gives the attributes of the ministers thus: A minister should be pure in his action. The echoes of ethics keep recurring throughout Kural. "Let the minister scorn shameless deeds that promise neither earthly fame nor the distant prospect of heaven."³¹ A deceitful minister is sure to bring about the ruin of the Ruler. The support of such a minister is like preserving water in a pitcher of unbaked clay."³²

The minister must be aware of laws of the land and be capable of wise counsel at any time of need.³³ For this he should be learned and a man-of-the world at once.³⁴ He should be able to judge people. A Ruler is advised to accept a counsellor even at great sacrifice who can read the thoughts of others.³⁵ Persuasive speech is a quality most indispensable to a minister;³⁶ for

"on his very tongue rests the fortune or the ruin of his Ruler.³⁷

Valluvar commends the qualities essential to a good minister. He wants the minister to be definite and authoritative in his counsel, once he has weighed the pros and cons of a matter.³⁸ A minister who is not resolute in his actions is not respected by wise men, notwithstanding his all other virtues.³⁹ Valluvar also decries defection. A minister should be committed to his cause. Let him not desert a foolish Ruler; let him continually advise him.⁴⁰

The minister should also observe the accepted service etiquette in his relationship with the Ruler. It is in the interest of both. The minister should keep a respectable distance from the Ruler. He should neither be too familiar with the Ruler nor stand too aloof from him.⁴¹ Let him be like one who warms before a fire. If he is too close, the fire will scorch him; if he is too distant, he cannot gain the warmth and confidence of the Ruler, so essential for the success of his mission. "The foolish acts which a minister does through familiarity with the king cause his own downfall"

5. Bureaucracy

Valluvar's polity recognises the due place of the Executive. However the executives of

Valluvar are not bureaucrats, who are mere pen-pushers. To use the modern language, he prefers active "technologists" so to say, for executives. He relies heavily on expertise. "He should be employed in the service of the state who develops her resources and removes all her ills."⁴² For the secret of success of an undertaking depends on seeking the aid of the expert.⁴³ It is strange that 2000 years after he wrote, we are still debating whether experts or general administrators should run the government; and the Fullarton Committee in U. K. decided on a compromise. Here again Valluvar raises the board of caution against favouritism in appointments. "They shall be chosen on the basis of their uprightness and endurance."⁴⁴ In assigning their posts, Valluvar, again warns against placing square pegs in round holes. He clearly instructs: "Gauge the capacity of the servant, measure the work for which he is competent and then saddle him with that work."⁴⁵

6. Secret Service

A Ruler, however, cautious he is in choosing his ministers and executives, must have sources of his own to know what is going on around him—his Secret Service. It is to serve as a counter-check on the advice and counsel he receives, as

also on the continuing integrity and loyalty of his ministers and officers. Valluvar advises the Ruler to employ an intelligence corps for this purpose. The internal secret service is to this day a universal feature in any type of Government. The intelligence service and the code of laws are like the two eyes of the Ruler.⁴⁶ Through them he learns betimes all the minute affairs of his realm.⁴⁷ They also keep a watch on the Ruler's officers, his relatives and his enemies.⁴⁸ Thus the Ruler keeps himself abreast of all the developments—good or bad—of his realm which helps him immensely in making his decisions.

Valluvar lays down the qualifications of the Ruler's Intelligence Service. An intelligence service man should always work under cover, and have an iron will. Valluvar commends the disguise of an ascetic for service in the espionage corps; but he should never disclose his identity even under the worst of tortures.⁴⁹ He should act normal and have no suspicious air about him.⁵⁰ He should be also intelligent to get at secrets and pass them on to the Ruler in a precise, clear and unconfused manner.⁵¹ Valluvar advises the Ruler to be wary of his intelligence men too. A better way, he suggests to get information is to spy upon a spy.⁵² Better still is to get the information from three different spies (without each being aware of the other)

and if all three views tally, then accept it as the truth, he adds.⁵³

7. Judiciary

Justice or judiciary in Valluvar's polity is in the sole hands of the Ruler. Valluvar does not go into the details of administration of the judiciary. He only speaks of justice which is of abiding value. Valluvar equates a Ruler who dispenses perfect justice with the Almighty himself.⁵⁴ And he warns, the Ruler who prostitutes justice for his private ends. He will lose both his fortune and his domain.⁵⁵

8. Crime and Punishment

Though Valluvar is a humanitarian essentially, he speaks of the vital role of punishment for keeping order in a society. To punish the wicked in order to preserve peace and happiness is no reproach to the Ruler; it is his duty.⁵⁶ "Punishing the wicked is like removing the noxious weeds that choke the healthy growth of a sturdy plant".⁵⁷ Valluvar's concept of justice is thus based on plain commonsense reminding one of Confucius once. When Confucius was asked "Would you requite an injury with kindness?" he replied: "How do you requite a kindness,

then?", and added "Requite kindness with kindness and injury with justice."

However, Valluvar is not for inflicting heavy punishments rashly. "Bitter words and heavy punishments, like the keen edge of a saw, wear away the conquering might of a Ruler".⁵⁸ The very threat of punishment should be able to keep the people from doing wrong. A judge should look stern and severe, but in meteing out justice he should season it with mercy."⁵⁹ In the dispensation of justice a Ruler should first investigate the accusation impartially, judge according to the nature of the guilt and award such punishment as will act as a deterrent.⁶⁰ Valluvar further expatiates: "Go into the details of a crime, view things impartially without being swayed by any motive; consult the wise men of the realm; that is the way to administer even-handed justice."⁶¹

Thus Valluvar not only stresses perfect justice but also prescribes a "due process of law" to prove a guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt." Valluvar's instructions to the Ruler reads like a present day Judge's instructions to the jury. His advice to the Ruler not to judge a crime by his opinion alone, but to consult the wise men speaks of his great respect for the "due process of law",—which alone can minimise the inherent human bias to the extent humanly possible.

9. Social Contract

Even a just Ruler assisted by wise ministers, that help in legislation, competent executives, that have expertise and a learned and understanding judiciary who form the three limbs of the State cannot bring peace and prosperity to the country if its citizens are devoid of certain basic values of life. A country can be happy only when the rich, the wise and the working class live in concord and amity.⁶² The people should have a voluntary "Social contract" as was envisaged by Rousseau, so to say, with the polity, based on common goodwill. A country will never prosper, if there is no harmony between the Ruler and the Ruled. This relation between the Ruler and the Ruled is born out of the "social instinct of fellowship" as Confucius would have it. "Renowned is the land that is not divided into warring sects and torn with internal dissensions and does not nourish in her bosom murderous traitors." Patriotism should inform the Ruled as much as the Ruler and there should be reciprocity of devotion in the common cause of defence and development. Then will the levies of State on the people fall on the sure ground of everlasting love and mercy. The people will then ungrudgingly make good even the severest drain on the country's resources in times of calamity.

10. Social Code for the People

Notable Among the social evils he condemns in a polity are prostitution, drinking and gambling. These can be fought only by society itself. So he lays down duties of the people as much as their rights on matters that should be dealt with by conventions and understanding of the Society itself—forming the Fourth Arm, as it were of the State. 'Where is hell, he asks, for degrading and abject souls but in the bedecked arms of the deceitful prostitutes?'. Drinking brings down one in esteem. It makes him dead to all sense of modesty and shame. On evils of gambling he says gripping poverty springs from nothing else than gambling and leads one to endless woes.

11. Character of a People

The qualities that citizens should have, so essential for a good state, are further elaborated under what has been rather inappropriately termed the "Miscellaneous" section (ஒழியியல்) of the Kural. Valluvar speaks of the people of high birth, not based on their lineage (birth never determines the nobility or littleness of a soul.) but on their nobility. "Men of

birth never play false to their innate sense of modesty, their rectitude and their truthfulness." "Rather go without the very things that nourish and sustain your life and die, than lead a life of dishonour which brings disgrace to your home." —exhorts Valluvar. Those who hold the honour and renown of their house in high regard will not descend to ignoble deeds. Nothing brings greater renown to a man than his untiring zeal to add to the glory of his house. Success, of its own accord, attends those who ceaselessly toil for the renown of their race. On the need for greatness in men he says "The glory of life is in the titanic energy of the soul to achieve the impossible. The poverty of life is the poverty of the spirit which is content with a mere dunghill existence." Perfection of character based on affection, dread of sin, benevolence, benignity and truth, is another important quality of good citizens. In such a society even begging is no shame. To beg of them that deny not even in their dreams is as sweet as to give. Common courtesy is essential for harmony of the society; but for it the world would be a mere heap of dust and ashes.⁸⁰ Niggardliness is despicable in a society. The riches of a miser are like the fruits of a poison tree in the heart of a village.⁸¹

PART SIX

FOREIGN POLICY

FOREIGN POLICY

1. Foreign Relations

On Foreign Policy, Valluvar is highly pragmatic and his ethics is informed by a sense of relativity. He puts on the mantle of a skilful diplomat and a strategist. The rules of the ethical game required for state craft are not like those of the Medes and Persians in their application. The ethical codes differ for different political situations. At times they may look contradictory. But that is only apparent in essence. All his ethical codes are of lofty origin, and in the final analysis in harmony with one another; for they all aim at the common good. Possibly Valluvar was influenced by the realities of the warring culture of the nations of his times. War in his times was equated with personal valour, and hence a desirable attribute of the Ruler

and his subjects. Centuries later dealing on the subject Freud, the father of psychoanalysis observed "The tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctive disposition in man." Much of Valluvar's foreign policy, therefore, is taken up by the art of warfare and war diplomacy. Obviously Valluvar was influenced by the stern belief that the Ruler is the defender of the realm and to defend is his first and last duty.

And defence is inextricably involved in offence. So aggression and annexation form part and parcel of a Ruler's foreign policy. "A mighty Ruler should possess a powerful army, loyal subjects, infinite resources, far-seeing ministers, good friends and impregnable defence arrangements." Napoleon once said "God is on the side of the bigger battalions." He should have known better. However war between two equally mighty Rulers can rarely be decisive. In war, therefore, it is the weak and tiny kingdoms that are invariably the targets of attack. A prudent ruler would rather strike hard at the weaker one, measure his strength with the powerful one." "Glory is not for the prince who does not take advantage of a weak and ignorant foe." On the face of it, this policy of Valluvar looks unethical and destructive. A closer searching would make clear the moral that war can be prevented only by preparing for war. "To be prepared for war is one of the

most effectual means of preserving peace," said George Washington, that greatest of Generals and Statesmen. May be Valluvar wanted to put forth the concept of, what we now call, the balance of power for world peace. Valluvar may also have possibly, been of the view that a country be rather conquered by a strong Ruler than drag itself under a weakling. Historically the strong ones attempting, if not annexing, the domains of the weaker ones, in one way or the other, has basically been the time-honoured foreign policy of nations.

2. Defence and Diplomacy

The defence of a country is maintained both by might as well as by diplomacy. Valluvar advocates a path of diplomacy which even now is fresh in its outlook. He advises the Ruler to make allies of his foes. This is what we now have in the form of defence pacts. Also, a Ruler should never wage war on two fronts. "When alone, contend not against two foes at a time; but make one of them your agreeable ally." He has a valuable advice for the weak Rulers also. A weak Ruler would do well to accept the olive branch graciously offered by his mightier foe than confront him." A Ruler can also, if able, spread his influence far, through

friendly diplomacy. "The whole world is under the sway of the prince who takes away the sting of hate and turns the frowns of foes into smiles". Thus Valluvar drives home the point that though war is inevitable, a Ruler can also immensely gain by way of tactful diplomacy, both in time of war and peace.

3. Art of Warfare

Valluvar dwells at length on the art of warfare. Before declaring war, a Ruler should take into consideration the sinews of war, the engines of destruction, the nature of action, the fitting time and the proper theatre of operation.

The sinews of war—finance—he holds has always been the ultimate determinant of the outcome of a war. "Money, more money and still more money" was what the Mercantilists considered the essentials for a war. Even today the economic resources of a nation invariably determines its battle power. Valluvar, therefore, gave prime importance to mobilisation of adequate finance before plunging into war. He says a heroic defence of a fortress alone is not enough; it has to be well-stored with victuals of all kinds to last the war. "In vanquishing an enemy a Ruler need not be particular how

the state gets the money to fight. War Finance has its own codes. It is beyond the canons of Peace Finance. Amassing wealth is the surest way of humbling the pride of the foe."

A war requires extensive and intensive planning. A Ruler who wages a war without planning out the details is only paving the way to the success of the enemy.⁹² Before going to war the Ruler should judge his own strength and resources as compared with those of his enemy. He should also understand the full implications of his enterprise, weigh his strength, and should be ever intent on it. Such a one knows no defeat.⁹³ Lastly, Valluvar sounds a warning: "Many a Ruler who has not gauged his strength and that of his powerful enemy has been humbled in the midst of the battle."⁹⁴

In Valluvar's days wars were commenced only after formal declaration. Even now we have an international convention which requires a nation to declare war formally before beginning the offensive. However, in reality, nations now seem to circumvent this cardinal rule by such preposterous excuses as being "invited" to annex a nation or "teaching a lesson" to another nation.

A Ruler should bide his time before declaring war. History is replete with instances of mighty warriors failing in their ambition by aiming their invasions at wrong times. Conquerors who aspire

to the sovereignty of the world, must also wait, unruffled for the fitting moment.⁹⁵ A Ruler should not be impelled even by his own passion to declare war at an inopportune time. The prudent Ruler does not fly into a fit of passion at the insult of the enemy; but smothers his wrath to allow it to burst into a greater fury at the right moment.⁹⁶

It is true that wars are no more fought on agreed battle grounds as in Valluvar's days. But even now the geography of the situation has to be necessarily taken into consideration in a war. A Ruler should, once the right opportunity comes, choose the right place of battle. Valluvar advises the Ruler not to declare war until he has gained the vantage ground:⁹⁷ "Never fight the enemy on his own ground"⁹⁸ A well-built stronghold will set at nought all the enemy's strategems.⁹⁹ Even if weak, a Ruler can prevail over his enemy if he can spy out a suitable field of action.¹⁰⁰

Strengthening the base of attack, namely, the fortress is no less important than choosing the right place of battle. A fortress is invaluable both when the Ruler is on the offensive and when he is on the defensive.¹⁰¹ The fortress should be strong enough to withstand the outright onslaught of the enemy as well as adequately provisioned to stand a siege.¹⁰²

4. Qualities of a Soldier

Preparation by way of choosing the right time and place and a strong fortress are no doubt essential prerequisites of war. But to what avail will they all be, if the army is not valiant and disciplined?¹⁰³ In war "man not materials forms the decisive factor". So reads a page from Chairman Mao's Red Book. By a valiant soldier, Valluvar means a soldier "who deems that day spent in vain that has not seen a battle-wound on his brave breast!"¹⁰⁴ Valluvar gives the attributes of a national army as "valour, honour, an acquaintance with the old, glorious traditions of the army and loyalty to the chief!"¹⁰⁵

5. Qualities of an Army General

And he enjoins on the Ruler, on his part, to keep the army contented, well-paid and in suitable strength.¹⁰⁶ Napoleon was very particular of his own dictum that it in war morale counts for three quarters and manpower for only one quarter. Last but not the least, Valluvar speaks of the vital place of the general in the army. It is he who makes all the difference between victory and defeat. Asks Valluvar, "Of what avail are the forces ready for war, if there be no general bold to lead them on to victory."¹⁰⁷

6. Importance of War Strategy

Though valour should inform every soldier in a war, it is not prudent for him to lead with his chin up. To die in battle may bring glory to him, but will it bring victory to his side? "No man ever won a war by dying for his country, but by making the other dumb men die for his"—are the famous words of that famous Second World War American General Patton. In war there is no substitute for victory, declared Douglas MacArthur, another hero, of the Second World War. Valluvar also asks the soldiers to follow reason rather than passion when the situation so warrants. 'Fight out your foe wherever you can. Wherever you cannot adopt some other method of warfare to vanquish your foe,'¹⁰⁸ An army should be valiant and tactful too. It is the strategy that counts in a war. In attacking, it should avoid the strong points of the enemy and march on them such that it suffers no loss itself.¹⁰⁹ When applied properly even a safe retreat can gain a victory.¹¹⁰

7. Ambassadors

War and peace have alternated throughout human history. So too the relationship between the nations. If in times of war nations turned

enemies to each other, in times of peace they maintained friendly relationship. In either case the ambassador or the emissary plays a crucial role. He is the lynchpin of diplomacy. It is on his ability that the external fortunes of a Ruler rests. An emissary is capable of bringing about the ruin of the Ruler too. Therefore Valluvar makes a special mention of the qualities of an ambassador. In fact, what he prescribed still forms a valid criterion for choosing the diplomats.

The basic qualities of a good ambassador are native intelligence, a commanding personality and profound learning.¹¹¹ Eloquence is essential for his functioning. A true ambassador carries conviction home by his persuasive eloquence.¹¹² He should also act with tact if he should fulfill his assignments. He should know the decorum of the court, seize the opportune moment and present his well-thought out case.¹¹³ Commitment to the cause is the mark of a diplomat. He shall not turn against his Ruler even under the threat of torture.¹¹⁴ An ambassador who enhances the prestige of his nation even in mightier nations is a statesman among statesman.¹¹⁵

PART SEVEN

SUMMING UP

SUMMING UP

Thiruvalluvar's Kural is of undying value and relevance, firstly, because it is a poem about mankind as a whole echoing through the interminable corridors of time. Secondly, Kural is not centred on other-worldly concepts belonging to the realm of mysticism, possible for comprehension only to the initiated. It revolves around a down-to-earth ideal of social and individual ethics—so essential for the smooth working of society.

However ethics is not an unvarying concept. The ethical codes differ for different walks and situations of life. They have as much a sense of relativity as of permanence; of applied values as of fundamental significance. At times they

may look contradictory too. But that is only apparent and not real. All ethical codes of lofty origin are in the final analysis in harmony with each other for they all aim at the common good.

A third factor responsible for the universal appeal of Kural may be that Valluvar circumscribed his teachings to the orbit of the day-to-day experience, understanding and needs of mankind.

Valluvar's ideas on polity do not make for a manual of statecraft for any particular form of Government. Though his teachings are addressed of to monarchy, they are relevant to any form of Government encompassed in the Aristotlean cycle,—from monarchy to mobocracy—or perhaps to any other innovation, political philosophers may in future think of. The unique contribution of Valluvar is that he holds the ruled as well as the Ruler responsible for the just and orderly functioning of a state in relation to the Society around them. And so it is, he expatiates not only on the essential attributes and the functions of a Ruler of a state, but also of its people. For, the two—the Ruler and the ruled—stand in an organic relation in the political syndrome.

The internal policies of Kural may be discussed under the conventional classification of the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary.

The Legislative consists of the ruler, and the Council of Ministers. The Executive comprises the hierarchy on top with expertise for carrying out State policies. And the Judiciary is made up of the ruler and the time-honoured code of laws, written and unwritten.

But everywhere it is the quality of man that counts, with the ruler at the eminence of the apex. And so, Valluvar speaks of (a) the personal attributes—knowledge, wisdom, valour and so on, of the Ruler and (b) attributes of his functioning — accessibility to the people, listening to the counsels of wise men and ministers, choosing the ministers and the executive, how to wield the sceptre and how not to, the requisite forethought and planning, and so on.

Similarly, of the attributes of the ministers such as scholarship, persuasive speech, firm conviction, boldness in action etc, and also of their relationship with the Ruler.

In the like manner Valluvar catalogues the qualities of a good executive. While on the subject of internal policies, Valluvar dwells on the role of the Intelligence Service who is to serve as the eyes and ears of the Ruler, gaining for him an insight into the functioning of the ministers, the executives, as well as into the conduct of the people and foes alike.

Under Judiciary, Valluvar talks about the importance of a just Ruler, of crime and punishment

tempered with mercy and the proper course of dispensing justice.

Finally, Valluvar dwells elaborately on the attributes, duties and responsibilities of the people themselves as individuals and as members of the social polity in thirteen long chapters, relegated to the place of "Miscellaneous" by an unwary but otherwise learned commentator, beguiled by alien traditions that have not given due emphasis to the role and responsibility of the people in a wise conduct of the state. This is his unique contribution—the place of the duties and responsibilities of the people in the successful running of a polity — a contribution few ancient writers of political philosophy had thought of until the dawn of democratic ideas through the advent of a Social Contract Theory by Lock and Rousseau.

Under Foreign Policies, Valluvar places great emphasis on the art and diplomacy of warfare in a highly realistic manner. He discusses about the army, the defence, the quality of the soldiers, battle strategies, alliances and treaties, and the use of medicine in forging them, etc. He also discusses the varying role of diplomacy in varying contexts for both the strong and weak Rulers and the special contribution that envoys or ambassadors can make, and the qualities they should possess for a success of their role.

All in all, Valluvam, — as the body of systematic reflections of the poet Valluvar on the individual in his diverse relation to society is known—stands as a basic guide bequeathed to successive generations of mankind, in the understanding and conduct of the affairs of a polity and its economics irrespective of changes in time, clime, and form of governments.

Part I

- 1 வையத்துள் வாழ்வாங்கு வாழ்பவன் வானுறையும்
தெய்வத்துள் வைக்கப் படும். (50)
- 2 Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, by 'M'.
- 3 இலக்கிய மின்றேல் இலக்கண மின்றே;
எள்ளின் ருகில் எண்ணெயு மின்றே. —தொல்காப்பியம்
- 4 ஆயிர முகத்தால் அகன்ற தாயினும்
பாயிர மில்லது பனுவ லன்றே. —நன்னூல்:பாயிரம்
- 5 அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு. (1)
- 6 கற்றதனால் ஆய பயன்என்கொல் வாலறிவன்
நற்றூள் தொழாஅ ரெனின். (2)
- 7 துப்பார்க்குத் துப்பாய துப்பாக்கி, துப்பார்க்குத்
துப்பாய தூஉம் மழை. (12)
- 8 வானின் றுலகம் வழங்கி வருதலால்
தான்அமிழ்தம் என்றுணரற் பாற்று. (11)
- 9 விண்ணின்று பொய்ப்பின் விரிநீர் வியன்உலகத்து
உண்ணின்று உடற்றும் பசி. (13)
- 10 ஏரின் உழாஅர் உழவர் புயல்என்னும்
வாரி வளம்குன்றிக் கால். (14)
- 11 விசும்பின் துளிவீழின் அல்லால்மற் றுங்கே
பசும்புல் தனாகாண் பரிது. (16)
- 12 நெடுங்கடலும் தண்ணீர்மை குன்றும் தடிந்தெழிலி
தான்நல்கா தாகி விடின. (17)
- 13 சிறப்பொடு பூசனை செல்லாது வானம்
வறக்குமேல் வானோர்க்கும் ஈண்டு. (18)
- 14 நீரின்று அமையாது உலகெனின் யார்யார்க்கும்
வானின்று அமையா தொழுக்கு. (20)

- 15 கெடுப்பதூஉம் கெட்டார்க்குச் சார்வாய்மற் றுங்கே
எடுப்பதூஉம் எல்லாம் மழை. (15)
- 16 ஒழுக்கத்து நீத்தார் பெருமை விழுப்பத்து
வேண்டும் பனுவற் றுணிவு. (21)
- 17 அந்தணர் என்போர் அறவோர்மற் றெவ்வுயிர்க்கும்
செந்தண்மை பூண்டொழுக லான். (30)
- 18 ஐந்தவித்தான் ஆற்றல் அகல்விசும்பு ளார்கோமான்
இந்திரனே சாலும் கரி. (25)
- 19 நிறைமொழி மாந்தர் பெருமை நிலத்து
மறைமொழி காட்டி விடும். (28)
- 20 குணமென்னும் குன்றேறி நின்றார் வெகுளி
கணமேயும் காத்தல் அரிது. (29)
- 21 செயற்கரிய செய்வார் பெரியர்; சிறியர்
செயற்கரிய செய்கலா தார். (26)
- 22 துறந்தார் பெருமை துணைக்கூறின் வையத்து
இறந்தாரை எண்ணிக்கொண் டற்று. (22)
- 23 குணமென்னும் குன்றேறி நின்றார் வெகுளி
கணமேயும் காத்தல் அரிது. (29)
- 24 மனத்துக்கண் மாசிலன் ஆதல் அனைத்தறன்;
ஆகுல நீர பிற. (34)
- 25 அழுக்காறு, அவா, வெகுளி, இன்னாச்சொல் நான்கும்
இழுக்கா இயன்றது அறம். (35)
- 26 சிறப்பீனும் செல்வமும் ஈனும் அறத்தினூஉங்கு
ஆக்கம் எவனோ உயிர்க்கு? (31)
- 27 அறத்தான் வருவதே இன்பம்; மற்றெல்லாம்
புறத்த; புகழும் இல. (39)
- 28 செயற்பால தோரும் அறனே; ஒருவற்கு
உயர்பால தோரும் பழி. (40)
- 29 அன்றறிவா மென்னு தறஞ்செய்க; மற்றது
பொன்றுங்கால் பொன்றாத் துணை. (36)
- 30 வீழ்நாள் படாஅமை நன்றாற்றின் அஃதொருவன்
வாழ்நள் வழியடைக்கும் கல். (38)

- 31 ஒல்லும் வகையான் அறவினை ஓவாதே
செல்லும்வாய் எல்லாம் செயல். (33)
- 32 கலங்காது கண்ட வினைக்கண் துளங்காது
தூக்கங் கடிந்து செயல். (668)
- 33 ஆயிரத்து முந்நூற்று முப்ப தருங்குறளும்
பாயிரத்தி னோடு பகர்ந்ததற்பின் — போயொருத்தர்
வாய்கேட்க நூலுளவோ? மன்னு தமிழ்ப்புலவ
ராய்க்கேட்க வீற்றிருக்க லாம். — திருவள்ளுவமலை
- 34 எப்பொருள் யார்யார்வாய்க் கேட்பினும், அப்பொருள்
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்ப தறிவு. (423)
- 35 உறுபசியும் ஓவாப் பிணியும் செறுபகையும்
சேரா தியல்வது நாடு. (734)
- 36 இன்மையின் இன்னுதது யாதுஎனின் இன்மையின்
இன்மையே இன்னு தது. (1041)
- 37 இன்மை யெனஒரு பாவி மறுமையும்
இம்மையும் இன்றி வரும். (1042)
- 38 தொல்வரவும் தோலும் கெடுக்கும் தொகையாக
நல்குரவு என்னும் நசை. (1043)
- 39 இற்பிறந்தார் கண்ணையும் இன்மை இளிவந்த
சொற்பிறக்கும் சோர்வு தரும். (1044)
- 40 நல்குரவு என்னும் இடும்பையுள் பல்குரைத்
துன்பங்கள் சென்று படும். (1045)
- 41 துப்புரவு இல்லார் துவரத் துறவாமை
உப்பிற்கும் காடிக்கும் கூற்று. (1050)
- 42 இன்மை இடும்பை இரந்துநீர் வாம்என்னும்
வன்மையின் வன்பாட்டது இல். (1063)
- 43 இரந்தும் உயிர்வாழ்தல் வேண்டின் பரந்து
கெடுக உலகியற்றி யான். (1062)
- 41 தெண்ணீர் அடுபுற்கை யாயினும் தாள்தந்தது
உண்ணலின் ஊங்கினியது இல். (1065)
- 45 ஆவிற்கு நீர்என்று இரப்பினும் நாவிற்கு
இரவின் இளிவந்தது இல். (1066)

- 46 இடம்எல்லாம் கொள்ளாத் தகைத்தே இடம் இல்லாக்
காலும் இரவுஒல்லாச் சால்பு. (1064)
- 47 இரக்க இரத்தக்கார்க் காணின் கரப்பின்
அவர்பழி தம்பழி அன்று. (1051)
- 48 இரப்பாரை இல்லாயின் ஈர்ங்கண்மா ஞாலம்
மரப்பாவை சென்றுவந் தற்று. (1058)
- 49 இரப்பான் வெகுளாமை வேண்டும் நிரப்பிடும்பை
தானேயும் சாலும் கரி. (1060)
- 50 இரப்பான் வெகுளாமை வேண்டும் நிரப்பிடும்பை
தானேயும் சாலும் கரி. (1060)

பொருள் செயல் வகை

- 51 குன்றேறி யானைப்போர் கண்டற்றால் தன்கைத்தொன்று
உண்டாகச் செய்வான் வினை. (758)
- 52 அறனீனும் இன்பமும் ஈனும் திறனறிந்து
திதின்றி வந்த பொருள் (754)
- 53 அருளொடும் அன்பொடும் வாராப் பொருளாக்கம்
புல்லார் புரள விடல். (753)
- 54 பொருளானும் எல்லாம்என்று ஈயாது இவறும்
மருளானும் மாணப் பிறப்பு. (1002)
- 55 ஈட்டம் இவறி இசைவேண்டா ஆடவர்
தோற்றம் நிலக்குப் பொறை. (1003)

நன்றியில் செல்வம்

- 56 ஏதம் பெருஞ்செல்வம் தான்துவ்வான் தக்கார்க்கு ஒன்று
ஈதல் இயல்பிலா தான். (1006)
- 57 அற்றார்க்குஒன்று ஆற்றாதான் செல்வம் மிகநலம்.
பெற்றாள் தமிழள்முத் தற்று. (1007)
- 58 நச்சப் படாதவன் செல்வம் நடுவூருள்
நச்சு மரம்பழுத் தற்று. (1008)

ஊக்கமுடைமை

- 59 உடைய ரெனப்படுவது ஊக்கம்அஃ தில்லார்
உடையது உடையரோ மற்று? (591)
- 60 உள்ளம் உடைமை உடைமை; பொருளுடைமை
நில்லாது நீங்கி விடும். (592)
- 61 ஆக்கம் இழந்தேமென்று அல்லாவார் ஊக்கம்
ஒருவந்தம் கைத்துடை யார். (593)
- 62 உள்ளுவ தெல்லாம் உயர்வுள்ளல்; மற்றது
தள்ளினும் தள்ளாமை நீர்த்து. (596)
- 63 உரம்ஒருவற்கு உள்ள வெறுக்கை; அஃதில்லார்
மரம்; மக்க ளாதலே வேறு. (600)
- 64 வெள்ளத் தனைய மலர் நீட்டம்; மாந்தர்தம்
உள்ளத் தனையது உயர்வு. (595)

மடியின்மை

- 65 மடியுளான் மாமுகடி யென்ப மடியிலான்
தாளுளாள் தாமரையி னாள். (617)
- 66 வினைக்கண் வினைகெடல் ஒம்பல் வினைக்குறை
தீர்த்தானின் தீர்ந்தன் றுலகு. (612)
- 67 இன்பம் விழையான் வினைவிழைவான் தன்கேளிர்
துன்பம் துடைத்தூன்றும் தூண். (615)
- 68 பொறியின்மை யார்க்கும் பழியன்று; அறிவறிந்து
ஆள்வினை இன்மை பழி. (618)
- 69 தெய்வத்தான் ஆகா தெனினும் முயற்சிதன்
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலி தரும். (619)
- 70 தாளாண்மை இல்லாதான் வேளாண்மை பேடிகை
வாளாண்மை போலக் கெடும். (614)
- 71 தாளாண்மை என்னும் தகைமைக்கண் தங்கிற்றே
வேளாண்மை என்னும் செருக்கு. (613)
- 72 அருமை உடைத்தென்று அசாவாமை வேண்டும்
பெருமை முயற்சி தரும். (611)

- 73 நெடுநீர் மறவி மடிதுயில் நான்கும்
கெடுநீரார் காமக் கலன். (605)
- 74 மடிமடிக் கொண்டொழுகும் பேதை பிறந்த
குடிமடியும் தன்னினும் முந்து. (603)
- 75 மடுத்தவாய் எல்லாம் பகடுஅன்னான் உற்ற
இடுக்கண் இடர்ப்பாடு உடைத்து. (624)
- 76 இடுக்கண் வருங்கால் நகுக; அதனை
அடுத்தார்வது அஃதுஒப்ப தில். (621)
- 77 வெள்ளத் தனைய இடும்பை அறிவுடையான்
உள்ளத்தின் உள்ளக் கெடும். (622)
- 78 அடுக்கி வரினும் அழிவிலான் உற்ற
இடுக்கண் இடுக்கண் படும். (625)
- 79 இடும்பைக்கு இடும்பை படுப்பர் இடும்பைக்கு
இடும்பை படாஅ தவர். (623)
- 80 உழுவார் உலகத்தார்க்கு ஆணி; அஃதாற்றாது
எழுவாரை எல்லாம் பொறுத்து. (1032)
- 81 உழவினார் கைம்மடங்கின் இல்லை விழைவதாஉம்
விட்டேம் என்பார்க்கும் நிலை. (1036)
- 82 சுழன்றும்ஏர்ப் பின்னது உலகம்; அதனால்
உழந்தும் உழவே தலை. (1031)
- 83 பல்குடை நீழலும் தங்குடைக்கீழ்க் காண்பர்
அலகுடை நீழ் லவர். (1034)
- 84 உழுதுண்டு வாழ்வாரே வாழ்வார்; மற்றெல்லாம்
தொழுதுண்டு பின்செல் பவர். (1033)
- 85 இரவார் இரப்பார்க் கொன்றுசுவர் கரவாது
கைசெய்துண் மாலை யவர். (1035)
- 86 தொடிப்புழுதி கஃசா உணக்கின் பிடித்தெருவும்
வேண்டாது சாலப் படும். (1037)
- 87 ஏரினும் நன்றால் எருஇடுதல்; கட்டபின்
நீரினும் நன்றதன் காப்பு. (1038)
- 88 இலமென்று அசைஇ இருப்பாரைக் காணின்
நிலமென்னும் நல்லாள் நகும். (1040)

- 89 செல்லான் கிழவன் இருப்பின் நிலம்புலந்து
இல்லாளின் ஊடி விடும். (1039)
- 90 சுழன்றும் ஏர்ப் பின்னது உலகம்; அதனால்
உழந்தும் உழவே தலை. (1031)
- 91 நளியிரு முந்நீர்....
வெளிற்றுப்பனந் துணியின் வீற்றுவீற்றுக் கிடப்பக்
களிற்றுக்கணம் பொருத கண்ணகன் பறந்தலை
வருபடை தாங்கிப் பெயர்புறத் தார்த்துப்
பொருபடை தருஉங் கொற்றமும் உழுபடை
ஊன்றுசால் மருங்கின் ஈன்றதன் பயனே;
மாரி பொய்ப்பினும் வாரி குன்றினும்
இயற்கை அல்லன செயற்கையில் தோன்றினும்
காவலர்ப் பழிக்கும்இக் கண்ணகல் ஞாலம்:
அதுநன் கறிந்தனை யாயின் நீயும்
நொதும் லாளர் பொதுமொழி கொள்ளாது
பகடுபுறந் தருநர் பாரம் ஒம்பிக்
குடிபுறந் தருகுவை யாயின்நின்
அடிபுறந் தருகுவர் அடங்கா தோரே. (புறம். 35)
(வெள்ளைக்குடி நாகனார் சோழன் குளமுற்றத்துத்
துஞ்சிய கிள்ளிவளவனை நோக்கிப் பாடியது)
- 92 ஆற்றின் அளவறிந்து ஈக; அதுபொருள்
போற்றி வழங்கும் நெறி. (477)
- 93 அளவறிந்து வாழாதான் வாழ்க்கை உளபோல
இல்லாகித் தோன்றாக் கெடும். (479)
- 94 உளவரை தூக்காகாத ஒப்புர வான்மை
வளவரை வல்லைக் கெடும். (480)
- 95 தள்ளா விளையுளும் தக்காரும் தாழ்விலாச்
செல்வரும் சேர்வது நாடு. (731)
- 96 மற்றை உயர்திணைப் பொருள்களோடும் சேர்தல்
தொழிலோடும் இயையாமையின் விளையுள் என்பது
உழவர்மேல் நின்றது. (பரிமேலழகர் உரை)
- 97 அறவோர், துறந்தோர், அந்தணர் முதலானோர்
... இதனால் அழிவினமை பெறப்பட்டது.
(பரிமேலழகர், 731)

- 98 இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலும் காத்தலும் காத்த
வகுத்தலும் வல்லது அரசு. (385)
- 99 உறுபொருளும் உல்கு பொருளும்தன் ஒன்னுர்த்
தெறுபொருளும் வேந்தன் பொருள் (756)
- 100 வைத்தாரிறந்துபோக நெடுங்காலம்நிலத்தின்கட்கிடந்து
பின் கண்டெடுத்த தூஉம் தாயத்தார் பொருததூமாம்.
(பரிமேலழகர், 756)
- 101 வேலொடு நின்றான் இடுவென் றதுபோலும்
கோலொடு நின்றான் இரவு. (552)
- 102 ஆறிலொன்று ஒழியவும் உரியன கூறியவாறு.
(பரிமேலழகர், 736)
- 103 அஃதாவது ஆறிலொன்றாய பொருள் தன்னையும்
வறுமை நீங்கியவழிக் கொள்ளல் வேண்டின்
அவ்வாறு கோடலும், இழத்தல் வேண்டின்
இழத்தலுமாம். (பரிமேலழகர், 390)
- 104 முறைசெய்து காப்பாற்றும் மன்னவன் மக்கட்கு
இறையென்று வைக்கப்படும். (388)
- 105 கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி ஒருவற்கு
மாடல்ல மற்றை யவை. (400)
- 106 யாதானும் நாடாமால் ஊராமால் என்னொருவன்
சாந்துணையும் கல்லாத வாறு? (397)
- 107 நல்லார்கட் பட்ட வறுமையின் இன்னுதே
கல்லார்கட்பட்ட திரு. (408)
- 108 மேற்பிறந்தா ராயினும் கல்லாதார் கீழ்ப்பிறந்தும்
கற்றார் அனைத்திலர் பாடு. (409)
- 109 விலங்கொடு மக்க ளனையர் இலங்குநூல்
கற்றாரொடு ஏனை யவர். (410)
- 110 மிகினும் குறையினும் நோய்செய்யும் நூலோர்
வளிமுதலா எண்ணிய மூன்று. (941)
- 111 அற்றால் அளவறிந்து உண்க; அஃதுஉடம்பு
பெற்றான் நெடிதுய்க்கும் ஆறு. (942)
- 112 தியளவு அன்றித் தெரியான் பெரிதுண்ணின்
நோயள வின்றிப் படும். (943)

- 113 அற்றது அறிந்து கடைப்பிடித்து மாறல்ல
துய்க்க துவரப் பசித்து. (944)
- 114 நாடென்ப நாடா வளத்தன; நாடல்ல
நாட வளந்தரும் நாடு. (739)
- 115 பிணியின்மை, செல்வம், விளைவு, இன்பம், ஏமம்
அணியென்ப நாட்டிற்கிவ் வைந்து. (738)
- 116 உறுபசியும் ஓவாப் பிணியும் செறுபகையும்
சேராது இயல்வது நாடு. (734)
- 117 ஆங்குஅமைவு எய்தியக் கண்ணும் பயனின்றே
வேந்துஅமை வில்லாத நாடு. (740)

Part IV

- 1 மழித்தலும் நீட்டலும் வேண்டா உலகம்
பழித்த(து) ஒழித்து விடின்.
- 2 இருமை வகைதெரிந்து ஈண்டறம் பூண்டார்
பெருமை பிறங்கிற்று உலகு.
- 3 நுண்ணிய நூல்பல கற்பினும் மற்றும்தன்
உண்மை அறிவே மிகும்.
- 4 இறைகாக்கும் வையகம் எல்லாம்; அவனை
முறைகாக்கும் முட்டாச் செயின்.
- 5 வேலன்று வென்றி தருவது; மன்னவன்
கோலதூஉம் கோடா(து) எனின்.
- 6 கொலைமேற் கொண்டாரில் கொடிதே அலைமேற்
கொண்டு
அல்லவை செய்தொழுகும் வேந்து.
- 7 வேலொடு நின்றான் இடு என்றது போலும்
கோலோடு நின்றான் இரவு.
- 8 வெருவந்த செய்தொழுகும் வெங்கோலன் ஆயின்
ஒருவந்தம் ஒல்லைக் கெடும்.
- 9 முறைகோடி மன்னவன் செய்யின் உறைகோடி
ஒல்லாது வானம் பெயல்.
- 10 அல்லற்பட்டு ஆற்றாது அழுதகண் ணீர் அன்றே
செல்வத்தைக் கெடுக்கும் படை.
- 11 இறைகடியன் என்றுரைக்கும் இன்னாச் சொல் வேந்தன்
உறை கடுகி ஒல்லைக் கெடும்.
- 12 அஞ்சாமை ஈகை அறிவூக்கம் இந்நான்கும்
எஞ்சாமை வேந்தற்கு) இயல்பு.
- 13 இவறலும் மாண்பிறந்த மானமும் மாண
உவகையும் ஏதம் இறைக்கு.

- 14 உட்கப் படாகர் ஒளிஇழப்பர் எஞ்ஞான்றும்
கட்காதல் கொண்டு ஒழுகுவார்.
- 15 கவறும் கழகமும் கையும் தருக்கி
இவறியார் இல்லாகியார்.
- 16 காட்சிக் கெளியன் கடுஞ்சொல்லன் அல்லனேல்
மீக்கூறும் மன்னன் நிலம்.
- 17 அருச் செல்வி இன்ன முகத்தான் பெருஞ்செல்வம்
பேய்கண்டு அன்ன(து) உடைத்து.
- 18 அரியஎன்று ஆகாதஇல்லை பொச்சாவாக்
கருவியால் போற்றிச் செயின்.
- 19 இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலும் காத்தலும் காத்த
வகுத்தலும் வல்ல தரசு.
- 20 அளவறிந்து வாழாதான் வாழ்க்கை உளபோல
இல்லாகித் தோன்றக் கெடும்.
- 21 அறிவதூஉம் ஆவதூஉம் ஆகி வழிபயக்கும்
ஊதியம் சூழ்ந்து செயல்.
- 22 ஆகுஆறு அளவுஇட்டுது ஆயினும் கேடில்லை
போகுஆறு அகலாக் கடை.
- 23 இடிக்கும் துணையாரை ஆள்வாரை யாரே
கெடுக்குந் தகைமை யவர்.
- 24 வினைக்கண் வினையுடையான் கேண்மை வேறாக
நினைப்பாளை நீங்கும் திரு.
- 25 முதலிலார்க்கு(கு) ஊதியம் இல்லை; மதலையாம்
சார்பிலார்க்கு(கு) இல்லை நிலை.
- 26 தேரான் பிறனைத் தெளிந்தான் வழிமுறை
தீரா இடும்பை தரும்.
- 27 குடிப்பிறந்து குற்றத்தின் நீங்கி வடுப்புரியும்
நாணுடையான் கட்டே தெளிவு.
- 28 அறம் பொருள் இன்பம் உயிரச்சம் நான்கின்
திறம் தெரிந்து தேறப் படும்.
- 29 காதன்மை கந்தா அறிவறியார்த் தேறுதல்
பேதமை எல்லாந் தரும்.

- 30 தேறற்க யாரையும் தேராது; தேர்ந்தபின்
தேறுக தேறும் பொருள்.
- 31 என்றும் ஒருவுதல் வேண்டும், புகழொடு
நன்றி பயவா வினை.
- 32 சலத்தாற் பொருள் செய்(து) ஏமார்த்தல் பசுமண்
கலத்துள்நீர் பெய்திரீஇ யற்று.
- 33 அறனறிந்(து) ஆன்றமைந்த சொல்லான் எஞ்ஞான்றும்
திறனறிந்தான் தேர்ச்சித்துணை.
- 34 செயற்கை யறிந்தக் கடைத்தும் உலகத்
தியற்கை யறிந்து செயல்.
- 35 குறிப்பின் குறிப்புணர் வாரை உறுப்பினுள்
யாது கொடுத்துங் கொளல்.
- 36 சொல்ல வல்லன் சோர்விலன் அஞ்சான் அவனை
இகல்வெல்லல் யார்க்கும் அரிது.
- 37 கேட்டார்ப் பிணிக்குந் தகையவாய்க் கேளாரும்
வேட்ப மொழிவதாஞ் சொல்
- 38 தெரிதலும் தேர்ந்து செயலும் ஒருதலையாச்
சொல்லும் வல்ல(து) அமைச்சு.
- 39 எனைத்திட்பம் எய்தியக் கண்ணும் வினைத்திட்பம்
வேண்டாரை வேண்டா(து) உலகு.
- 40 அறிகொன்று அறியான் எனினும் உறுதி
உழையிருந்தான் கூறல் கடன்.
- 41 அகலா(து) அணுகாது தீக்காய்வார் போல்க
இகல் வேந்தர்ச் சேர்ந் தொழுகுவார்.
- 42 வாரிப் பெருக்கி வளம்படுத்(து) உற்றவை
ஆராய்வான் செய்க வினை.
- 43 செய்வினை செய்வான் செயல்முறை அவ்வினை
உள்ளறிவான் உள்ளங் கொளல்.
- 44 அறிந்தாற்றிச் செய்கிற்பாற்(கு) அல்லால் வினைதான்
சிறந்தா என்று ஏவற்பாற் றன்று.
- 45 இதனை இதனால் இவன் முடிக்கும் என்றாய்ந்(து)
அதனை அவன்கண் விடல்.

- 46 ஒற்றும் உரைசான்ற நூலும் இவை இரண்டும்
தெற்றென்று மன்னவன் கண்.
- 47 எல்லார்க்கும் எல்லாம் நிகழ்பவை எஞ்ஞான்றும்
வல்லறிதல் வேந்தன் தொழில்.
- 48 வினைசெய்வார் தஞ்சுற்றம் வேண்டாதார் என்றாங்கு
அனைவரையும் ஆராய்வ(து) ஒற்று.
- 49 துறந்தார் படிவத்தர் ஆகி இறந்தாராய்ந்(து)
என் செயினும் சோர்வில(து) ஒற்று.
- 50 கடா உருவொடு கண்ணஞ்சாது யாண்டும்
உகாஅமை வல்லதே ஒற்று.
- 51 மறைந்தவை கேட்கவற்றுகி அறிந்தவை
ஐயப்பாடு இல்லாததே ஆகி.
- 52 ஒற்றிலின்றித் தந்த பொருளையும் மற்றுமோர்
ஒற்றினால் ஒற்றிக் கொளல்.
- 53 ஒற்றெற்ற(து) உணராமை ஆள்க; உடன்முவர்
சொற்றெக்க தேறப்படும்.
- 54 முறைசெய்து காப்பாற்றும் மன்னவன் மக்கட்கு
இறையென்று வைக்கப் படும்.
- 55 கூழுங் குடியும் ஒருங்கிழக்கும் கோல்கோடிச்
சூழாது செய்யும் அரசு.
- 56 குடிபுறங் காத்தோம்பிக் குற்றங்கடிதல்
வடுவன்று வேந்தன் தொழில்.
- 57 கொலையிற் கொடியாரை வேந்தொறுத்தல், பைங்கூழ்
களைகட் டதனெடு நேர்.
- 58 கடுமொழியும் கையிகந்த தண்டமும் வேந்தன்
அடுமுரண் தேய்க்கும் அரம்.
- 59 கடிதோச்சி மெல்ல எறிக; நெடிது ஆக்கம்
நீங்காமை வேண்டு பவர்.
- 60 தக்காங்கு நாடித் தலைச் செல்லா வண்ணத்தால்
ஒத்தாங்கு) ஒறுப்பது வேந்து.
- 61 ஓர்ந்துகண் ணேட்டா(து) இறைபுரிந்து யார்மாட்டும்
தேர்ந்து செய் தேவமுறை.

- 62 தள்ளா விளையுரும் தக்காரும் தாழ்விலாச்
செல்வரும் சேர்வது நாடு.
- 63 ஆங்காமை யெய்தியக் கண்ணும் பயனின்றே
வேந்தமை இல்லாத நாடு.
- 64 பக்குமுவும் பாழ்செய்யும் உட்பகையும் வேந்தலைக்கும்
கொல்குறும்பம் இல்லது நாடு.
- 65 அருளொடும் அன்பொடும் வாராப் பொருளாக்கம்
புல்லார் புரள விடல்.
- 66 பொறையொருங்கு மேல் வருங்கால் தாங்கி இறைவற்கு
இறையொருங்கு நேர்வது நாடு.
- 67 வரைவிலா மாணிழையார் மென்றோள் புரையிலாப்
பூரியர்கள் ஆழும் அளறு.
- 68 உண்ணற்க கள்ளை; உணில் உண்க சான்றோரால்
எண்ணப்பட வேண்டாதார்.
- 69 நான் என்னும் நல்லாள் திறங்கொடுக்கும், கள் என்னும்
பேணப் பெருங் குற்றத்தார்க்கு.
- 70 சிறுமை பல செய்து சீரழிக்கும் சூதின்
வறுமை தருவதொன்று இல்.
- 71 மேலிருந்தும் மேல் அல்லார் மேலல்லார்; கீழிருந்தும்
கீழல்லார் கீழ் அல் லவர்.
- 72 ஒழுக்கமும் வாய்மையும் நாணும் இம் மூன்றும்
இழுக்கார் குடிப்பிறந் தார்.
- 73 இன்றி அமையாச் சிறப்பின வாயினும்
குன்ற வருபவிடல்.
- 74 சலம் பற்றி சால்பில செய்யார் மாசற்ற
குலம் பற்றி வாழ்தும் என்பார்.
- 75 கருமம்செய ஒருவன் கைதூவேன் என்னும்
பெருமையில் பீடுடையது இல்.
- 76 சூழாமல் தானே முடிவெய்தும் தம்குடியைத்
தாழாது உஞற்று பவர்க்கு.
- 77 ஓரியொருவற் குள்ள வெறுக்கை; இனியொருவற் கு
அஃதிறந்து வாழ்வதும் எனல்.

- 78 அன்புநான் ஒப்புரவு கண்ணோட்டம் வாய்மையோடு
ஐந்துசால்பு ஊன்றிய தூண்.
- 79 இரத்தலும் ஈதலேபோலும் கரத்தல்
கனவிலும் தேற்றாதார் மாட்டு.
- 80 பண்புடையார்ப் பட்டுண்டுலகம்'' அது இன்றோல்
மண்புக்கு மாய்வது மன்.
- 81 நச்சுப் படாதவன் செல்வம் நடுஊருள்
நச்சு மரம்பழுத் தற்று.
- 82 படைகுடி கூழ் அமைச்சு நட்பரண் ஆறும்
உடையான் அரசருள் ஏறு.
- 83 வலியாற்கு மாறேற்றல் ஒம்புக: ஒம்பார்
மெலியார் மேல் மேக பகை.
- 84 கல்லான் வெகுளும் சிறுபொருள் எஞ்ஞான்றும்
ஒல்லாணை ஒல்லா(து) ஒளி.
- 85 நட்டார்க்கு நல்ல செயலின் விரைந்ததே
ஒட்டாரை யொட்டிக் கொளல்.
- 86 தன்துணை இன்றால்: பகை இரண்டால்; தான்ஒருவன்
இன்துணையாகக் கொள்கவற்றின் ஒன்று.
- 87 உறைசிறியார் உள்ஒடுங்கல் அஞ்சிக் குறைபெறின்
கொள்வர் பெரியார்ப் பணிந்து.
- 88 பகைநட்பாக் கொண்டொழுகும் பண்புடையாளன்
தகைமைக் கண் தங்கிற்று(து) உலகு.
- 89 பொருள் கருவி காலம் வினையிட னெடு ஐந்தும்
இருள்தீர எண்ணிச் செயல்.
- 90 எல்லாப் பொருளும் உடைத்தாய் இடைத்துதவும்
நல்ஆள் உடைய(து) அரண்.
- 91 செய்க பொருளைச், செறுநர் செருக்கறுக்கும்
எஃகு; அதனின் கூரிய(து) இல்.
- 92 வகையறச் சூழாது எழுதல் பகைவரைப்
பாத்திப் படுப்பதோர் ஆறு.
- 93 ஒவ்வது அறிவது அறிந்ததன் கண் தங்கிச்
செல்வார்க்குச் செல்லாதது இல்.

- 94 உடைத் தம் வலி அறியார் ஊக்கத்தின் ஊக்கி
இடைக்கண் முரிந்தார் பலர்.
- 95 காலங் கருதி இருப்பர் கலங்காது
ஞாலங் கருதுபவர்.
- 96 பொள்ளென ஆங்கே புறம்வேரார் காலம் பார்த்து
உள்வேர்ப்பர் ஒள்ளியவர்.
- 97 தொடங்கற்க எவ்வினையும் என்னற்க முற்றும்
இடங்கண்ட பின்னல் லது.
- 98 சிறை நலும் சீரும் இலரெனினும் மாந்தர்
உறைநிலத்தோடு ஒட்டல் அரிது.
- 99 எண்ணியர் எண்ணம் இழப்பர் இடனறிந்து
துன்னியர் துன்னிச் செயின்.
- 100 ஆற்றாரும் ஆற்றி அடுப; இடன் அறிந்து
போற்றார் கண் போற்றிச் செயின்.
- 101 ஆற்றுவவர்க்கும் அரண்பொருள் அஞ்சித்தன்
போற்றுவவர்க்கும் பொருள்.
- 102 முற்றியும் முற்ற(து) எறிந்தும் அறைப்படுத்தும்
பற்றற்(கு) அரியது அரண்.
- 103 எனைமாட்சித் தாகியக் கண்ணும் வினைமாட்சி
இல்லார் கண் இல்ல(து) அரண்.
- 104 விழுப்புண் படாதநாள் எல்லாம் வழக்கினுள்
வைக்கும் தன்நானே யெடுத்து.
- 105 மறம் மானம் மாண்ட வழிச் செலவு தேற்றம்
என நான்கே ஓமம் படைக்கு.
- 106 சிறுமையும் செல்லாத் துணிபும் வறுமையும்
இல்லாயின் வெல்லும் படை.
- 107 நிலைமக்கள் சால உடைத் தென்னுந் தானே
தலை மக்கள் இவ்வழி இல்.
- 108 ஒல்லும்வாய் எல்லாம் வினைநன்றே; ஒவ்வாக்கால்
செல்லும்வாய் நோக்கிச் செயல்.
- 109 தார்தாங்கிச் செல்வது தானே; தலைவந்த
போர்தாங்குந் தன்மை அறிந்து.

- 110 சிறுபடையான் செல் இடம் சேரின் உறுபடையான்
ஊக்கம் அழிந்து விடும்.
- 111 அறிவுருவு ஆராய்ந்த கல்வி இம்மூன்றன்
செறிவுடையான் செல்க வினைக்கு.
- 112 கற்றுக்கண் அஞ்சான் செலச் சொல்லிக் காலத்தால்
தக்க(து) அறிவதாம் தூது.
- 113 கடனறிந்து காலங்கருதி இடனறிந்(து)
எண்ணி உரைப்பான் தலை.
- 114 விடுமாற்றம் வேந்தர்க்(கு) உரைப்பான் வடுமாற்றம்
வாய்சோரா வன்க ணவன்.
- 115 நூலாருள நூல்வல்லன் ஆகுதல் வேலாருள்
வென்றி வினையுரைப்பான் பண்பு.

